

JULY 11, 2005

**IN THESE
TIMES**

ENVIRONMENTALISM IS DEAD.

WHAT'S NEXT?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Environmentalism Is Dead. What's Next?

By Adam Werbach

16 Progressives have accepted ecology. Now they need to implement its lessons.

Battling Big Cola By Mark Winne

24 Parents and health advocates fight to make sure Pepsi is not the choice of a new generation.

Thanks, But We'll Do It Ourselves

By Slavoj Žižek

26 The French and Dutch vote against enlightened administration.

Class Consciousness Matters

By David Moberg

28 What's been missing from the *New York Times* and Wall Street Journal.

Hand Over the Keys By Nir Eisikovits

30 A generous gesture can make a dramatic difference.

No Negotiations By Neve Gordon

31 Sharon lets slip his plans for the West Bank.

Contents

Volume 29 - Number 16

- 6 Revolution in Bolivia** By Ryan Grim
The government's failure to nationalize its massive natural gas reserves has led to an explosive situation.
- 8 The Cannabis War** By Steve Wishnia
The Supreme Court decides one battle, but advocates vow to fight on for medicinal marijuana.
- 8 Appallo-O-Meter** By Dave Mulcahey
- 10 Arrest the Messenger** By Erin Mosely
Niger imprisons anti-slavery activist Ilgurias Weila.
- 11 In Person** By Liane Casten
Jane Akre and Steve Wilson are journalists, not activists.
- 12 Viewpoint** By Hans Johnson
The sad saga of Scott Bloch.
- 13 The Third Coast** By Salim Muwakkil
Black men are missing in action.
- 14 The First Stone**
By Joel Bleifuss
Supporting mass murderers and America's middle finger.

32 • Torture Fatigue By Silja J.A. Talvi

ESSAY The media's portrayal of torture is setting up a real-life *Sin City*.

34 • Terronomics By Phyllis Eckhaus

BOOKS Loretta Napoleoni has the numbers. But what about the facts?

35 • Origin of the Specious

By Stephen J. Fortunato

BOOKS Know your enemy: Mark Levin's *Men In Black*.

36 • Original Sin By Chris Barsanti

BOOKS *Squandered Victory* reminds us to look before leaping.

37 • Respect the Technique

By Anna Grace Schneider

MUSIC Immortal Technique knows America's true religion.

40 • Embedded with Tim Robbins

By Joel Bleifuss

BACKPAGE Taking the war from stage to screen.

Cover by Rachel Jefferson

“A unified left cannot be built by putting together a laundry list of worthy causes in the hope of building a non-ideological coalition. How to unite people across lines of parochial interest and in favor of the general interest is what we will have to teach ourselves.”

JAMES WEINSTEIN
THE LONG DETOUR



Editorial

Move Over, Boomers By Jessica Clark

In his interview with two 30-something environmentalists who have challenged the movement's status quo, Contributing Editor

Adam Werbach asks if the baby boomers are to blame for the sad state of affairs. "What should these leaders do now?" he asks. "Die?" ("No More of the Same," p. 21)

No blood need be shed, but many boomers are reluctantly being forced to make way for younger activists with a crop of new ideas. Pragmatic, visionary and entrepreneurial, these "practivists," molded by the social and political trends of the last 15 years, are reshaping progressive politics.

Raised during the heyday of ecological activism and the rise of a post-industrial networked society, practivists are steeped in systems thinking. Having come of age during the fall of the Berlin Wall, they are suspicious of nationalism and artificial dualities, a mistrust further informed by academic and political training in deconstructing absolute identity categories like race or gender. Practionists prefer to emphasize similarities rather than dwell in the "silos" of various "isms."

Like other, less-politicized members of their cohort, practivists are also savvy consumers and media critics. They see politics as a fluid field of choice rather than a hard-and-fast test of their own radical identities, and understand both the value and the artificiality of branding,

sizzle and interactivity. Their political and cultural mobility allows them to imagine alliances that confound older activists trained in identity politics or issue-based organizing.

"The old era of political party identification is giving way to a disaggregated thunderdome of cause-based politics, distributed democracy, MoveOn house parties and do-it-yourself politics," writes Dan Carol in Alternet's new book, *Start Making Sense*. "Peer-to-peer politics ... is replacing the party as the place where new stuff happens."

Democrats, unions, and progressive membership organizations are all scrambling to attract the practivists, whose technical skills and yen for actually earning a living make them both valuable and hard to retain.

The class interests of the practivists may be their weakest link. Taught that identifying with or romanticizing the oppressed is akin to colonizing them, many of these bloggers, culture jammers and radical consultants operate from a place of privilege not rooted in working America. Howard Dean's call for small-donor support of the Democratic party, for example, applies more to middle-class

voters with cable modems and time for meet-ups than to workers struggling to raise children and navigate the minefields of economic instability and mass culture.

In their enthusiasm for new projects, practivists run the risk of replicating the boomers' mistake of turning their backs on the experiences of their predecessors. Critics may also find the practivists' calls for a kinder, more cooperative politics insufficiently tough—of a piece with George Lakoff's description of progressives as following a "nurturant parent" model. While this comparison has its appeal, it's uncomfortably similar to smears of the left as effete, wishy-washy, and weak—or, as California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger puts it, "girly."

This brings us to one of the not-so-dirty secrets of the practivists: Many are women, as educated, technically skilled and ambitious as their male counterparts, but less interested in inter-organizational competition and high-profile ideological sparring. Trained and inspired by feminism, they have explored the limitations of that movement and seek wider horizons. Some bide their time—as the grayer heads of their respective movements grandstand—by creating valuable infrastructure within and between their organizations. Others have started their own strategic and interconnected projects.

Either way, practivists have had enough of waiting for their elders to realize that their skills are exactly what's needed to forge the emerging progressive coalitions many now seek. ■

Letters

Not Our Nemagon

I read with great interest "Chiquita's Children" (May 23). Please print a clarification for your readers:

1. Chiquita has never been a producer of bananas in Nicaragua.
 2. Chiquita purchased bananas from independent farmers in Nicaragua until 1969, and the company resumed fruit purchases from Nicaragua in 2000. Therefore, Chiquita was not exporting bananas from Nicaragua during the period concerned in these lawsuits.
 3. At no time did Chiquita use DBCP in Nicaragua.
 4. Chiquita used DBCP in other Latin American countries from 1973 to 1977. We ceased using DBCP even before evidence appeared that it might cause health hazards and several years before the EPA revoked the registration of DBCP.
- At Chiquita, the health and safety of our employees is

paramount. All of our owned farms in Latin America are certified annually by the Rainforest Alliance, an independent conservation organization that reviews worker health and safety procedures on each farm. Our normal procedures for agrichemical use throughout the company are rigorous. Workers receive training on risks and safety procedures, routine medical exams, personal protective equipment and regular job rotation. In addition, Chiquita only uses agrichemicals approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the European Union and local governments. We do not apply in other countries products that are forbidden in the United States.

Michael Mitchell
Director, Corporate
Communications
Chiquita Brands International
Cincinnati, Ohio



NICHOLAS BERUBE RESPONDS

Many reports and worker lawsuits have documented Chiquita involvement in Nicaragua. In 1997, Chiquita Brands International and other companies paid \$41 million to 26,000 banana plantation workers from Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and the Philippines as a settlement for health problems created by the use of Nemagon (DBCP), regardless of the ownership of the banana plantations. However, I should have included the company's statement that it didn't have anything to do with Nicaragua or the workers' problems. It was the Nicaraguan banana workers themselves who told me that they worked for companies that sold bananas to United Fruit Company (a.k.a. Chiquita), and that's why the company is mentioned in their lawsuit.

The fact remains that for years the banana companies never made available any protection for the workers, who were exposed to a harmful product. I'm glad to hear that Chiquita has since taken steps to address that issue.

Cheering Against the Empire

I am grateful for Naomi Klein's reportage on the war in Iraq ("How to End the Oc-

cupation," May 23). She is the only one telling us about the privatization of state-owned industry, the construction of 14 military bases and the threat to abolish Saddam's free-food ration system.

But in her article she writes, "Not everyone fighting the U.S. occupation is fighting for the freedom of all Iraqis; some are fighting for their own elite power. That's why we need to stay focused on supporting the demands for self-determination, not cheering any setback for U.S. empire." Just as it is wrong for one man to own another man as a slave so is it also wrong for one country to own another country as a colony. So, we should indeed cheer any setback to the U.S. empire. What good is it? Look at the poverty and suffering in the empire's possessions—Puerto Rico, Haiti, Guantánamo, Iraq.

Of course, the unity-wrecking attacks of Sunni fighters shooting at Shia Iraqis praying in their mosques weaken the Iraqi resistance, and I agree with Klein that we should not applaud that atrocity. So then, give us the Iraqi personalities or movements or parties that do promote and practice unified resistance. I would cheer that kind of setback to the U.S. empire.

Sydney Spiegel
Casper, Wyo.

FIRE ON THE PRAIRIE



"Fire on the Prairie", a radio forum sponsored by *In These Times*, explores politics and ideas with progressive writers, thinkers and activists.

LISTEN IN AT:
www.fireontheprairie.com

PETA-Approved

Thank you for featuring KFC in your Appall-O-Meter section ("Threats to Our Way of Life," May 23). Each and every time undercover investigators have entered the facilities of KFC's suppliers, they have found hideous abuse and suffering. KFC's suppliers routinely chop the beaks off of baby chicks, drug their chickens with antibiotics to keep them alive through conditions that would otherwise kill them, slit open the throats of conscious animals and often scald them alive.

Even members of KFC's own animal welfare panel agree that KFC's present methods are cruel and must be changed. In fact, two of KFC's advisors, Dr. Temple Grandin and Dr. Ian Duncan, recently resigned after they were asked to sign an agreement preventing them from speaking publicly about KFC's animal welfare policies. Professor Duncan has reportedly acknowledged that PETA's claims do have some validity.

KFC's indifference to animal suffering and hostility to peaceful protesters indicates that the company lacks compassion and respect for others. PETA is simply asking KFC to take some basic steps to stop egregious cruelty to chickens.

Dan Shannon
Senior Campaign Coordinator

*People for the Ethical Treatment
of Animals (PETA)
Norfolk, Va.*

Not Officially Sanctioned

Phyllis Eckhaus writes that the 16th Century Catholic church "in cahoots with the Spanish throne" defended slavery and argued that Native Americans and, later, blacks were sub-human ("The Uses and Abuses of Race," May 23). Slavers may have tried out such arguments but the Church's official teachings would have none of it. In the 1430s, Pope Eugene IV ordered Spaniards who began enslaving the natives of the Canary Islands "to restore to their earlier liberty all and each person of either sex who ... are to be totally and perpetually free" or face excommunication. They chose excommunication. Pope Paul III wrote in 1537, "We ... noting that the Indians themselves indeed are true men ... by our Apostolic Authority decree and declare by these present letters that the same Indians and all other peoples—even though they are outside the faith— ... should not be deprived of their liberty or their other possessions ... and are not to be reduced to slavery, and that whatever happens to the contrary is to be considered null and void."

Other papal bulls condemning slavery were issued in 1462, 1639, 1741, 1815 and 1839. In 1686, the Inquisition took up the matter and declared it morally impermissible to capture "Blacks and other natives" to enslave them, adding that it was wrong also to buy or sell them and that those who held such were required to free and, further, to compensate them.

Douglas Taylor-Weiss
Auburn, N.Y.

PHYLLIS ECKHAUS RESPONDS

Citing papal encyclicals to show that the Catholic church wasn't complicit in slavery is misleading—rather like quoting the official pronouncements of Donald Rumsfeld to prove that the U.S. military doesn't engage in torture. Power is deceitful and history is complicated. I stand by my statement.

IN THESE TIMES

"With liberty and justice for all..."

FOUNDING EDITOR AND PUBLISHER
James Weinstein

EDITOR Joel Bleifuss
SENIOR EDITORS Craig Aaron, Patricia Aufderheide, Susan J. Douglass, David Moberg, Dave Mulcahey, Salim Muwakkil, David Sirota, Kurt Vonnegut
MANAGING EDITOR Jessica Clark
EDITORS-AT-LARGE Sheryl Larson, Cynthia Moothart
ASSOCIATE EDITOR Brian Cook
ASSISTANT EDITOR Phoebe Connelly
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS Terry J. Allen, Dean Baker, Frida Berrigan, Will Boisvert, Phyllis Eckhaus, Barbara Ehrenreich, Annette Fuentes, Juan Gonzalez, Miles Harvey, Christopher Hayes, Paul Hokenos, George Hodak, Doug Ireland, Hans Johnson, Dave Lindorff, Naomi Klein, John Nichols, James North, James Parker, Kim Phillips-Fein, Jehangir Pocha, Silja J.A. Talvi, Fred Weir, Adam Werbach, Slavoj Žižek
PROOFREADERS Alan Kimmel, Norman Wishner
INTERNS Christopher Burrow, Erin Mosely, Anna Schneider, Leighton Taylor, Pallav Vora, Jennifer Wedekind, Scott Witmer

ART DIRECTOR Rachel Jefferson
ILLUSTRATOR Terry LaBan
WEBMASTER Seamus Holman

PUBLISHER Jeff Epton
ASSOCIATE PUBLISHERS Aaron Sarver, Tracy Van Slyke
CIRCULATION DIRECTOR Peter Hoyt
ADVERTISING DIRECTOR Emily Udell

IN THESE TIMES PUBLISHING CONSORTIUM
Grant Abert, Theresa Alt, Stuart Anderson, Collier Hands, Polly Howells and Eric Werthman, Nancy Kricorian and James Schamus, Lisa Lee, Chris Lloyd, Edith Helen Monsees, Dave Rathke, Abby Rockefeller and Lee Halprin, Perry Rosenstein, Lewis Steel, Ellen Stone-Belic, Dan Terkel, Studs Terkel, James Weinstein

BOARD OF DIRECTORS Joel Bleifuss, Jeff Epton, Janet Geovanis, Robert McChesney, David Moberg, Dave Rathke, Beth Schulman

In These Times (ISSN 0160-5992) is published biweekly by the Institute for Public Affairs, 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647. Periodicals postage paid at Chicago, IL and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to *In These Times*, 308 E. Hitt St., Mt. Morris, IL 61054. This issue (Vol. 29, No. 16) went to press on June 10, for newsstand sales June 24 to July 8, 2005.

The entire contents of *In These Times* are copyright © 2005 by the Institute for Public Affairs, and may not be reproduced in any manner, either in whole or in part, without permission of the publisher. Copies of *In These Times* contract with the National Writers Union are available upon request. Contact the union at (212) 254-0279 or www.nwu.org.

Subscriptions are \$36.95 a year (\$59 for institutions; \$61.95 Canada; \$75.95 overseas). For subscription questions, address changes and back issues call (800) 827-0270.

Complete issues and volumes of *In These Times* are available from Bell and Howell, Ann Arbor, MI. *In These Times* is indexed in the Alternative Press Index and the Left Index. Newsstand circulation through Big Top Newsstand Services, a division of the IPA, at (415) 643-0161, or info@bigtoppubs.com.

Printed in the United States.



® GCU 759-C

HOW TO REACH US

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We encourage letters to the editor, and reserve the right to edit them for clarity, grammar and length. Send them to: 2040 North Milwaukee Avenue, Chicago, IL 60647.

PHONE (773) 772-0100

SUBMISSIONS

Writers may submit articles at www.inthesetimes.com/submissions. Please review the writer's guidelines posted on our Web site.

SPECIAL REQUESTS

To inquire about lost or damaged issues, back issues and classroom subscriptions, please contact Aaron Sarver at sarver@inthesetimes.com.

SUBSCRIPTION QUESTIONS

To renew your subscription or change your address, please call 1-800-827-0270.

ADVERTISING

To advertise or to request a media kit, please contact Emily Udell at extension 240.



RYAN GRIM

Revolution in Bolivia

The government's failure to nationalize its natural gas industry has led to an explosive situation. By Ryan Grim

BOLIVIAN LEGISLATORS ABANDONED a besieged La Paz on June 9 to convene in Sucre, nearly 500 miles to the southeast, in order to select a new president. But demonstrators had other ideas. Blockades were lifted so that truckloads of protesters could race to Sucre to prevent parliament from naming right-wing Senate leader Hormando Vaca Diez as the successor to the ousted Carlos Mesa. Mayors of La Paz and El Alto announced hunger strikes to oppose Vaca Diez, who was supported by only 16 percent of Bolivians in a recent poll.

Parliament's morning session was cancelled as miners, coca growers and other demonstrators battled police in the streets, leading to one death, labor leader Juan Coro, who was shot in the chest by police. According to news reports, several legislators urged the cancellation of the session so that

they could fly out of Sucre before demonstrators took over the airport. They didn't move quickly enough. In protest of Vaca Diez, airport workers went on strike and the airport was shut down. Now stuck in Sucre, parliament met near midnight and gave in. Vaca Diez—yes, his name is “Ten Cow”—resigned his constitutional right to ascend to the throne, as did the next in line, Marlo Cossio. At 11:47 p.m., the man whom protesters had been demanding for president, Supreme Court leader Eduardo Rodriguez, was sworn in.

Since then, blockades have been lifted along with tensions, and Rodriguez has vowed to call new elections for president and congress within six months. Bolivia has been locked in an ideological stalemate for several years now, but the wind seems to be blowing leftward after the last several weeks. Although the crisis is simmering for now, the main

thrust of the demonstrators' demand has not yet been met.

The uprising revolved around control of Bolivia's vast and recently discovered reserves of natural gas, valued at more than \$250 billion—10 times the nation's annual GDP. On May 16, the Bolivian government raised taxes on foreign companies who exploit the reserves. Indigenous groups took to the streets, claiming the bill didn't go far enough and calling for full nationalization of the industry. Evo Morales, leader of the strongest indigenous party in the nation—Movement Toward Socialism, or MAS—initially rejected calls for nationalization, asking instead for higher taxes. Caught in the middle, he has since moved to the left, endorsing nationalization but arguing that it should be done through a national constitutional assembly. A June 12 poll showed 76 percent support for nationalization.

On June 3, President Mesa capitulated to the demand of a constitutional assembly, but by that time it was clear that the demonstrators, two weeks into their stay in La Paz, were looking for more. Mesa offered his resignation, opening the door for Vaca Díez and the ensuing drama.

Jim Shultz, director of the Bolivian-based Democracy Center, reported during the crisis that a "very reliable source" told him that the United States was working behind the scenes to pave the way for Vaca Díez. Steve Pike, a State Department spokesperson, said he had no knowledge of any U.S. efforts to propel Vaca Díez, but if true, it's fitting that the United States would meddle in the crisis. In at least two significant ways, this is a crisis of U.S. making.

The lynchpin of these demonstrations—and the ones in October 2003 that drove Mesa's predecessor, Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada, from office—is MAS and Evo Morales. Though the left could surely raise hell in La Paz and El Alto without Morales, with him the coalition becomes a national force. The bad news for the United States, though, is that Evo Morales represents blowback from the U.S. war on drugs.

Morales' base and the roots of his strength lie in the Chapare region, which at its heyday grew between one half and two thirds of the world's coca—the plant needed to make cocaine—that has been the principal focus of U.S.-backed and -funded eradication efforts.

Generally speaking, eradication is not a peaceful affair.

On May 8, 2003, U.S.-funded joint task force agents raided Hilaria Pérez's coca farm. Pérez—who lives with her husband and four children in a two room, dirt floor shack with splintering wood walls—was shot in the back as she ran to her field to protect her only source of income. "It hurts to lift heavy things," she says, baring the jagged scar on her chest where the bullet exited. "I can't work in the field anymore." Godofredo Reinicke, the former head of the government's human rights taskforce, confirmed her story, adding that the soldier was never identified. Pérez and her husband are MAS party members.

Felipe Cáceres, a former two-term mayor of Villa Tunari and a right-hand man of Morales, says that U.S.-funded repression led to a backlash among the *cocaleros*, which MAS was able to channel into the tightly organized movement that exists today. Over papaya juice in his air conditioned home, a priest in Villa 14 de Septiembre agreed with Cáceres' assessment. "The strength of the party comes from the unity that has come from the coca issue," he says.

The United States created the monster demonstrations by giving rise to their primary demand. At U.S. urging, Bolivia sold off majority control of its oil and gas company to Enron and Shell in December 1996 for \$263.5 million, well less than 1 percent of what the gas alone is worth today. A decade later, indigenous Bolivians have the receipt and are demanding a refund.

With close to 80 percent backing, nationalization of the gas industry doesn't seem as radical an idea as it did even a month ago. The Washington Consensus has left a bad taste in Bolivia's mouth, and the nation may be ready for an alternative.

The next 6 months will be crucial for Bolivia. Will the left rally behind Evo Morales and bring about the rise of another left wing leader in a rapidly unifying South America? Or will factionalism allow another Harvard-trained economist to lead South America's poorest nation?

Stay tuned. You can be sure that Shell is. ■

RYAN GRIM is a frequent contributor to the Brooklyn Rail. He is writing a book on the global war on drugs.

IN SHORT

Hear no Evil

Cover your ears: The right-wing attack machine is gearing up its media echo chamber for the upcoming elections.

Its main targets have been new DNC chairman Howard Dean and that lightning rod of right-wing hate, Sen. Hillary Clinton (D-N.Y.).

In a June 6 article, *Business Week* asserted that Dean is not an effective fundraiser: "Few think he'll be another Terry McAuliffe, the human money machine whom he replaced." That talking point was repeated by Fox News' Brit Hume and John Gibson. But Media Matters for America found a slight problem with the math, as the stats compared Democrats to Republicans, and not Dean to any previous Democratic chairman during a non-election year. Dean has actually raised more money than McAuliffe had in the first three months of 2003, the most recent non-election year.

The upcoming book, *The Truth About Hillary*, by Edward Klein, promises to be, in the words of Matt Drudge, "the ultimate Hillary-attack." According to the *Washington Times*, "Just as the Swift Boat Veterans convinced millions of voters that John Kerry lacked the character to be president, [this] book will influence everyone who is sizing up the character of Hillary Clinton." And *Washington Times* reporter Jennifer Harper pondered, "So, could the book bring down Mrs. Clinton's candidacy before it begins?"

The good news is that embattled Democrats are fighting back. In a feisty speech at the Take Back America conference, Dean noted, "The Republican definition of a 'fine job' is to be reprimanded 3 times in a row for ethics violation. That's how Republicans do business."

And at a June 6 fundraiser, according to the *New York Times*, Clinton said, "It's very hard to stop people who have no shame about what they're doing. It is very hard to tell people that they are making decisions that will undermine our checks and balances and constitutional system of government who don't care. It is very hard to stop people who have never been acquainted with the truth."

—Christopher Burrow

APPALL-O-METER

STEVE WISHNIA is a writer based in New York.

3.9 Let the Freak Fly Across

Say you're a guard on the U.S.-Canadian border, and one day a Charlie Manson-looking dude shows up on foot, toting a blood-encrusted chainsaw, along with brass knuckles, a homemade sword and other dangerous objects. What are you supposed to do?

Apparently, you just take his weapons, fingerprint him and send him on his way into our country. According to the Associated Press, that's what U.S. border patrol agents in Maine did when a 22-year-old freak by the name of Gregory Despres traipsed up. To be fair, Despres was a naturalized U.S. citizen with no outstanding warrants. And, again to be fair, it was not yet learned that he had recently decapitated a neighbor and murdered another person in his New Brunswick hometown.

"Being bizarre is not a reason to keep somebody out of this country or lock them up," explained a U.S. Customs and Border Protection spokesman. "We are governed by laws and regulations, and he did not violate any regulations."

Amen, brother, but you might want to check that out with your bosses before spreading the word. Despres was picked up by Massachusetts cops who spotted him walking down a highway wearing a hoodie befouled with red and brown blotches.



2.4 Syllabus of Errors

Give right-wingers credit for upholding the belief that books really do matter, even if that article of faith occasionally moves them to burn books.

The conservative magazine *Human Events* assembled a blue ribbon panel of wingerdom's leading lights and asked them to compile the "ten most harmful books"

published in the last two centuries. The titles were also assigned a numerical score. Topping the list, not surprisingly, was *The Communist Manifesto*, which handily beat out second-place finisher, *Mein Kampf*. A close third was Mao's "little red book."

A hair behind Hitler and Mao's opuses was "The Kinsey Report," and close on its heels was *Democracy and Education* by John Dewey. Evil, evil tomes all. Bringing up the rear: John Maynard Keynes' hell-spawned *General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*.

And because a list of 10 is too short for the literary perniciousness of two centuries, honorable mention was given to some 20 other books, including *Origin of Species* and *Descent of Man* by Charles Darwin, and *Silent Spring* by Rachel Carson.

Tellingly absent from the list were "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion" and *Who Moved My Cheese?*

—Dave Mulcahey

HOMEGROWN MEDICAL marijuana qualifies as interstate commerce, the Supreme Court ruled June 6, in the second major setback it has delivered to pot patients.

By a 6 to 3 margin, the Court refused to grant an injunction protecting California medical-marijuana users Angel McClary Raich and Diane Monson from federal prosecution. As Monson grows her own and Raich gets hers donated by another California resident, the two women had argued that their supply is neither interstate nor commerce, so the federal government does not have the right to supersede California's law allowing medical use.

Justice John Paul Stevens, who wrote the majority opinion, acknowledged that Raich and Monson had "strong arguments" for medical marijuana; Monson suffers severe back spasms, and Raich, who suffers from a host of afflictions, says she would be dead without marijuana. But the main issue in this case, he wrote, was "whether Congress' power to regulate interstate markets for medicinal substances encompasses the portions of those markets that are supplied with drugs produced and consumed locally."

Personal medical-cannabis cultivation could increase the overall pot supply to the point where it would affect interstate commerce, Stevens argued, and allowing it would undermine the regulations needed to control illegal drugs and ensure the safety of legal medicines.

That logic, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor responded in dissent, would "extend Com-

merce Clause authority to something as modest as the home cook's herb garden." The Court's definition of economic activity, she wrote, is so broad that it "threatens to sweep all of productive human activity into federal regulatory reach."

In a separate dissent, Justice Clarence Thomas wrote that the federal government has the right to suppress local marijuana cultivation or use, but California could legitimately exempt medical growers and users from prosecution. The Bush administration, he added, had failed to offer "any obvious reason why banning medical marijuana use is necessary to stem the tide of interstate drug trafficking."

Ironically, Thomas wrote the majority opinion in the Court's 2001 decision, which held that since Congress has ordained that marijuana has no legitimate medical use, clinics could not claim "medical necessity" as a defense against pot-selling charges.

The interstate-commerce argument, several advocates say, was a weaker case than the medical-necessity defense. "I did not think that was the best argument," says Rep. Barney Frank (D-Mass.), who has introduced a bill to bar the federal government from prosecuting medical-marijuana users in states where it is legal. "It would have had very negative implications for federal power." The Commerce Clause is the basis for numerous federal laws, from occupational-safety regulations to banning racial discrimination in hotels.

"It was the liberals who did it in," notes Allen St. Pierre of the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws.



Last dance with Mary Jane?

JUSTIN SULLIVAN/GETTY IMAGES

The Court's liberal justices, he explains, were clearly sympathetic to the patients' plight, but uncomfortable with weakening the Commerce Clause's use.

The ruling does not invalidate medical-marijuana laws in the 11 states that have them, and most pot prosecutions are state-level. Instead, it leaves the status quo intact: Under federal law, anyone who grows or distributes pot is a felon—even if they're giving it to a migraine sufferer who's going to vomit if he can't get a couple of tokes quickly.

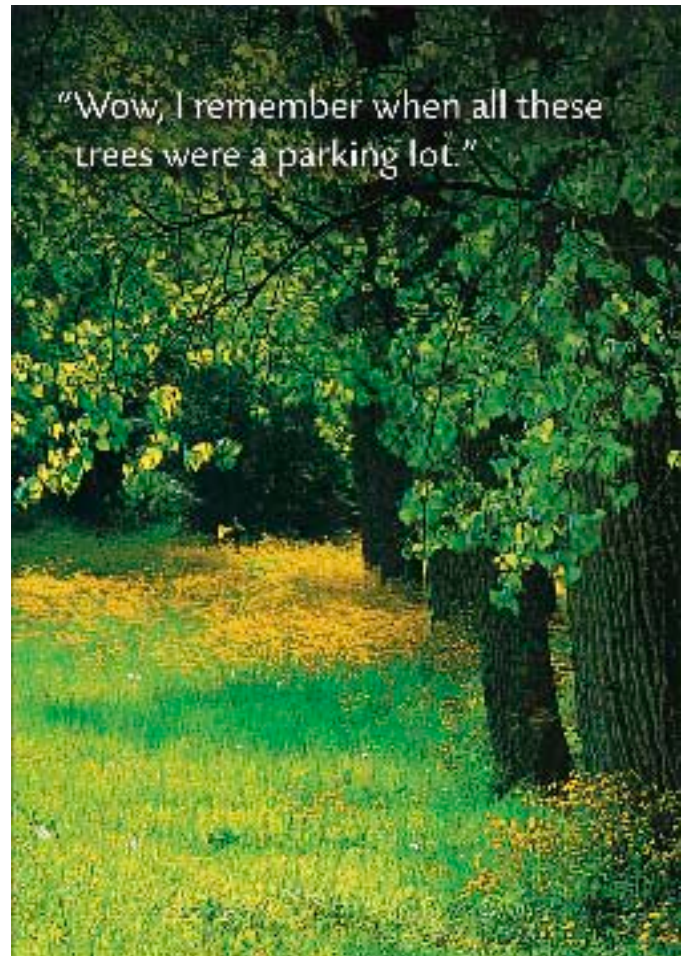
Medical-marijuana providers have simply been defying the law with the sanction of local governments. Under John Ashcroft, the Bush administration made medical pot a top priority, going after even small-scale growers; federal agents destroyed Diane Monson's six-plant garden in 2002. But it was embarrassed when several high-profile cases backfired. After a 2002 raid on the Wo/Men's Alliance for Medical Marijuana (WAMM) collective outside Santa Cruz, Calif., resulted in a confrontation between armed DEA agents and patients in wheelchairs, Santa Cruz County won a temporary

injunction halting future raids. "We plan to go on. People are dying. We can't stop," says a WAMM volunteer.

Immediately after the Raich decision, Oregon officials announced that the state would temporarily stop issuing new ID cards for pot patients, and Alaska is considering a similar move. In California, which has over 150 medical-marijuana providers, local governments have been more supportive. "It really doesn't affect us," says Jane Weirick of the Compassion and Care Center in San Francisco, which will "absolutely" keep operating.

State efforts will continue. Rhode Island's state senate approved a medical-marijuana bill on June 7, and New York's legislature may enact one this year. Nationally, Reps. Maurice Hinchey (D-N.Y.) and Dana Rohrabacher (R-Calif.) have introduced a budget amendment that would bar the use of federal funds to arrest, raid or prosecute patients in states where medical marijuana is legal.

"I'm kind of encouraged," says Frank. "This is one issue where the more public it becomes, the better we do, though obviously we're far from our goal." ■



"Wow, I remember when all these trees were a parking lot."

The future can be taller. Quieter.

And filled with green places.

Invest in tomorrow today.

Domini 

SOCIAL INVESTMENTS®

Investing For Good™

1-800-530-5321

www.domini.com

You should consider the Domini Funds' investment objectives, risks, charges, and expenses carefully before investing. Please obtain a copy of the Funds' current prospectus for more complete information on these and other topics by calling 1-800-530-5321 or online at www.domini.com. Please read it carefully before investing or sending money. DSIL Investment Services LLC, Distributor. 04/05

Arrest the Messenger

The government of Niger imprisons anti-slavery activist Ilguilas Weila. *By Erin Mosely*

ON APRIL 28, THE Nigerien government arrested Ilguilas Weila, president of Niger's premier anti-slavery organization, Timidria. Weila, recipient of the international Anti-Slavery Award in 2004, was seized after organizing a public ceremony to free 7,000 slaves in the country's western In Ates region. The ceremony was cancelled and officials charged Weila with spreading false information about slavery in Niger and eliciting illegal funds for Timidria.

The first charge was almost immediately dropped, and according to Anti-Slavery International, the London-based organization from which Weila obtained the funds he was allegedly planning to use illegally, the second charge should soon follow. "We have absolutely no evidence to suggest that Timidria acted illegally when it sought to raise funds," says Romana Cacchioli, Anti-Slavery's Africa program officer. "We believe [the] arrest is politically motivated and follows a pattern of government clamp-downs on human rights and civil society organizations."

In 2002, Weila conducted a first-of-its-kind national survey on slavery in Niger, a practice that affects an estimated 43,000 people. The survey, along with years of lobbying, persuaded the government in May 2004 to make slavery a punishable offense. Weila thanked Nigerien government officials for their cooperation during his acceptance of the Anti-Slavery Award, acknowledging that due to "their willingness, we have been able to make such



SARAH WILLIAMS/ANTI-SLAVERY INTERNATIONAL

significant progress in terms of restoring human dignity to Niger."

But it now appears the Nigerien government views slavery as a solved problem. BBC News reported that when the release of the 7,000 slaves was to occur, the ceremony was abruptly called off because the government denied slavery's existence in Niger. Anti-Slavery International, however, received reports that senior government authorities were "warning slave masters not to release their slaves officially," and Timidria reported that the government intimidated slaves in the In Ates region to dissuade them from attending the ceremony.

Weila was arrested with five of his colleagues and held at a police station in Niamey, Niger's capital, until May 5, when four were released. He and Alassane Biga were then transferred to a civilian prison where they remain today, having twice been denied bail.

Many believe the arrests stem from the government's fear of attracting negative attention

to Niger. According to Anti-Slavery International, Niger's President Mamadou Tandja is "embarrassed by any talk of slavery," especially now that he heads the Economic Community of West African States. "It would seem, however," says Cacchioli, "that this has seriously backfired, as civil society has unified in support of Timidria and slavery has now become a national issue." On May 19, approximately 2,000 people marched through Niamey to demand the release of Weila and Biga.

Niger is the second poorest nation in the world, with two-thirds of its population living below the poverty line. This destitution, coupled with the political instability experienced by Niger since it secured independence from France in 1960, has allowed slavery to survive in many parts of the country.

Many Nigeriens remain unaware that slavery has been officially abolished, largely because 82 percent of its population lives in impoverished rural areas. A lack of roads, the nomadic practices of many tribes and a cultural acceptance of the tradition of slavery also prevent slaves from realizing that they are legally entitled to freedom.

Timidria helps slaves by informing them of the new anti-slavery law, providing resources for them upon escape and slowly rehabilitating them back into society. The organization also initiates community development projects. In 2003, for example, the group established a school in the small village of Gounti Koirra, whose 400 inhabitants were formerly excluded from

any state-sponsored assistance because they are slaves and descendents of slaves.

Incensed by the government's attempt to hinder the work of Timidria, more than 30 local groups and international human rights organizations, including Anti-Slavery International and Global Rights, Partners for Justice, have called for the immediate release of Weila and Biga.

These groups are further alarmed because this kind of repression is increasingly common. In 2004, Hina Jilani, the U.N. Spec. Rep. of the Sec. General on Human Rights Defenders, issued 316 communications to governments across the globe, alerting them about specific infringements on the rights of activists and organizations. In her Fifth Annual Report to the U.N. Commission on Human Rights, Jilani expressed concern over "the continued increase in reports of serious violations of ... human rights defenders throughout the world."

TO TAKE ACTION in a letter-writing campaign to demand the immediate release of Ilguilas Weila and Alassane Biga, contact Sarah Williams

ROMANA CACCHIOLI/ANTI-SLAVERY INTERNATIONAL



This Nigerien slave's ankle bracelets signify her status.

IF ANY MORE PROOF WAS NEEDED THAT WE LIVE in an upside-down world, the saga of TV news reporters Steve Wilson and Jane Akre serves as the definitive case study.

Husband and wife, Wilson and Akre are exhausted emotionally and financially, but also relieved. Their eight-year struggle—known to many from the 2004 documentary, *The Corporation*—with WTVT, a Tampa, Fla. Fox affiliate, has come to an end. After two major court cases, and more angst than any two reporters should have to endure, Wilson and Akre settled their case by FedExing nearly \$200,000 to the network giant in May. They lost their appeal, having unsuccessfully fought a large corporation with very deep pockets.

It began when Fox fired the reporters in 1997, after they tried to air a story about the bovine growth hormone, rBGH. The report exposed its widespread use by U.S. dairy farmers, despite studies linking rBGH consumption to prostate and breast cancer. Monsanto, the producer of rBGH, threatened a lawsuit and demanded the elimination of significant, verifiable information from the story. Eventually, WTVT caved, despite Wilson and Akre's efforts to rewrite the story more than 70 times to redress the complaints.

The couple sued Fox under Florida's Whistle Blower's Act. In a jury trial, Akre and Wilson were awarded \$425,000. (The reporters knew not to spend it too soon.) In 2001, they were awarded the Goldman Environmental Prize for their outstanding reporting.

In an appeal, however, Fox argued that the FCC policy against distortion of news did not qualify as "law," and that therefore Akre and Wilson were not protected under the Florida act, which only protects those reporting an employer's violation of a "law, rule or regulation." The court accepted this argument, ruling for WTVT.

More appalling than the reversal were the five major media outlets that filed briefs of *amici curiae* in support of Fox's position. Their statement said, "The station argued that it simply wanted to ensure that a news story about a scientific controversy regarding a commercial product was presented with fairness and balance, and to ensure that it had a sound defense to any potential defamation claim."

Compounding the indignity of the ruling, Fox demanded \$3.1 million to pay its legal fees and trial costs. The punitive sum would have bankrupted the reporters. A judge decided that the sum was indeed draconian and reduced the damage to a little more than \$175,000. But this did not include the years of personal and legal expenses—hundreds of thousands of dollars—incurred by Wilson and Akre during the two earlier trials.

Wilson says that his "scrappy" trial lawyers, John Chamblee and Tom Johnson, almost lost their prac-

tice, because they were so invested in the case. "Even after we were tapped out," Akre says, "they chose to stay with us."

Today, the couple lives near Jacksonville. Having been unable to find a local reporting job, Wilson commutes back on weekends from Detroit, where he is the top investigative reporter for WXYZ—a Scripps Howard-

Journalists, not Activists

By Liane Casten

owned TV station. Akre is still looking for a full-time reporting job, but takes on assignments as they come. The two are now working on both a book and a screenplay about their experiences. "The idea of a film was always in the back of our minds," Akre says. "The whole experience had so many great characters in it."

But they haven't left the fight for journalistic integrity. In January, they filed a petition with the FCC to deny WTVT a renewal of its broadcast license. They've asked for a hearing based on news distortion, and Akre met briefly with FCC Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein at the recent National Conference for Media Reform. "We're questioning whether they have a solid enough character to own that license," she says. "Whether we won or lost the court case, we knew this was something we were going to pursue."

Akre still considers herself a journalist. "If I'm an advocate or activist, it's for the public's right to know," she says. But she believes shining light in dark places is getting harder as those in power control the free flow of information. "That's why it's more important today to be a journalist than any other time. If those in power call you an activist, maybe you're just a really great journalist." ■



Jane Akre

LIANE CASTEN is the founder of Chicago Media Watch.



Viewpoint *By Hans Johnson*

Scott Bloch's Sad Saga

Openly gay staff members bore the brunt of Bloch's wrath and were the focus of his reassignment plans.

ON FREEDOM, THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION speaks with a forked tongue. Executive rhetoric at the start of the second term has taken a welcome turn toward prodding other nations to respect human liberty. But such exhortations ring hollow—if not downright mendacious—in the face of what the president's appointee at the Office of Special Counsel (OSC) is doing to undermine civil rights, the rule of law and the legacy of public service here at home.

The saga of Scott Bloch and mismanagement at the OSC has persisted for a year and a half—under the radar of the national press. The agency upholds nondiscrimination policy and ensures protection for federal workers who blow the whistle on corruption, waste or abuse. The OSC is one reason public agencies have grown increasingly diverse and efficient, and it has traditionally done its job enforcing the federal workforce rulebook outside the crush of media scrutiny. But this low profile has become a cloak of obscurity that Bloch has ingeniously exploited.

Bloch began his tenure as Special Counsel in January 2004 following a stint on a Justice Department task force to secure selected churches a place at the trough of federal aid. Critics, including two former directors of the White House's "faith-based initiative," have lambasted that drive as a repudiation of fiscal discipline and a danger to churches' integrity. Legal observers warn that the effort threatens to subvert the First Amendment's safeguards against government interference in religion and weakens workplace anti-bias laws. No such scruples seem to bother Bloch in his assault on principle and precedent at the OSC.

In February 2004, Bloch began to roll back a 1975 policy barring discrimination against federal workers based on sexual orientation. He expunged mentions of anti-gay bias from the OSC Web site and hard-copy forms and notices. In April, following protests from labor and advocacy groups that his backroom maneuvering was causing confusion, he retreated. But by June, he was at it again, hemming and hawing on whether anti-gay bias was fair game in the workforce. And in July, instead of taking responsibility for his own hedging, he blamed his critics for "misunderstandings of the facts."

But the limited, public skirmish over the anti-bias policy was just a hint of the massive attack Bloch undertook inside the OSC. By March of this year, he was beyond resorting to fancy footwork or smarmy correspondence. He faced a lawsuit that shattered the silence he sought to maintain on the agency's inner

workings. The complaint combines hair-raising accounts of Bloch's mismanagement, repression and retaliation from a host of OSC staff with charges from a coalition of watchdog groups of Bloch's cronyism and assaults on transparency.

This alarming chronicle recounts an office climate pervaded by fear and fixated on secrecy. It also details insider hiring, slapdash dismissals of whistleblower complaints, staff reassignments to field offices and sudden departures by loyal and longtime staff members that have left the office crippled. Openly gay staff members appeared to bear the brunt of Bloch's wrath and were a focus of his reassignment plans.

A decimated and demoralized staff is not an efficient one. In April, with its chief expert on enforcing limitations on federal workers' politicking long gone, Bloch faced rebuke from an administrative judge for poor reasoning in bringing two complaints against federal workers who merely wrote an e-mail expressing political views. In May, a Senate oversight panel called Bloch on the carpet for the turmoil in his office.

"What we see Bloch doing on so many things is kind of extreme," said Colleen Kelley, president of the National Treasury Employees Union. Media coverage has slowly creaked to life. In late April, *Pride At Work*, the AFL-CIO affiliate for gay workers, honored Travis Elliott, one of the workers who left OSC during Bloch's reign.

A part-time law professor and attorney, Bloch held a trump card in the far-right game of claiming spoils and appointments in the Bush administration: affiliation with the extremist Claremont Institute of California. Hostile to government power during the Clinton years, Claremont has taken a radical detour under Bush, with a defense of sovereignty that borders on the authoritarian. Even affiliates like game-show host Pat Sajak cannot put a happy face on its propaganda, which include attacks on homosexuals and twisted justifications of torture.

For the past 18 months, Bloch has engaged in similar contortions to undo 30 years of workplace policy protecting federal workers. His placement at OSC is an undeserved trophy for the most extreme domestic foes of church-state separation and nondiscrimination policy.

Bloch's continued status as special counsel, at Americans' expense, diminishes the country's reputation for merit-based civil service and reinforces doubts about our nation's commitment to the rule of law. For a president eager to promote America as a beacon of freedom, Bloch is a dim bulb in dire need of replacement. ■

HANS JOHNSON
an In These Times
contributing editor,
writes on religion,
labor and politics
from Washington,
D.C.



Black Men: Missing

THE OVERWHELMING ABSENCE OF BLACK MEN has always been one of the most distressing facts about life in America's public housing developments. In Chicago, for example, black women are the vast majority of lease holders in the Chicago Housing Authority; men are like ghosts in the projects.

Besieged by poverty, disease, violence and mass incarceration, African-American men are conspicuously missing in action. At one time, this gender imbalance afflicted mostly lower-income neighborhoods. But as we limp into the 21st century, that gender gap is rending the fabric of the entire African-American community.

"Where have all the Black men gone?" asked the headline on a story by Jonathan Tilove for *The Star Ledger* in Newark, N.J. The article examined the New Jersey city of East Orange, where there are 37 percent more adult women than men. Tilove wrote that most of the missing men are dead, and many others are locked up or in the military.

"Worst yet," he wrote, "the gender imbalance in East Orange is not some grotesque anomaly. It's a vivid snapshot of a very troubling reality in black America." Tilove noted that nationwide adult black women outnumber black men by 2 million. With nearly another million black men in prison or the military, the reality in most black communities across the country is an even greater imbalance—a gap of 2.8 million, or 26 percent, according to Census Bureau figures for 2002. The comparable disparity for whites was 8 percent.

In some cities the gap is even higher. There are more than 30 percent more black women than men in Baltimore, New Orleans, Chicago and Cleveland. In New York City the number is 36 percent and in Philadelphia, 37 percent. As the black population ages, the gap widens. "By the time people reach their 60s in East Orange, there are 47 percent more black women than men," Tilove wrote.

This growing gender gap has enormously negative implications for the future of black America. And there are nuances in the statistics that make the prognosis even bleaker. For example, among well-educated, professional black women—a group that is growing rapidly—the gap is a chasm. Surely, that progress for black women is good news that shouldn't be overlooked. However, as black women advance, black men are falling even further behind.

In fact, the more successful a black woman becomes, the more likely she will end up alone, Walter Farrell, a University of North Carolina professor, said

in a March 2002 *Washington Monthly* article. As a result, professional black women are having fewer children, meaning that a growing percentage of black children are being born into less educated, less affluent families.

The recent edition of the *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* warns that "a large and growing gender gap in African-American higher education has become a troublesome trend casting a shadow on overall black education progress." The *Journal* reports that in 2001, there were 1,095,000 black women enrolled in institutions of higher education and only 604,000 black men. The gap, which is even wider at professional schools, has increased since 2001.

It's also important to note that despite unprecedented gains, black women are the fastest growing group of inmates in the nation's prisons. And they still bear the brunt of urban poverty as single parents in the commercial wastelands that too often are their neighborhoods.

Unless we make some dramatic changes in the way our society tracks black men, all of these conditions will worsen, with increasingly nightmarish consequences. The primary culprit is the tracking of black men into a criminal justice system that a growing number of critics have dubbed the "prison-industrial complex." Many are there because of the so-called war on drugs and its accompanying mandatory minimum sentences.

The tracking process begins in elementary school, where African-American males routinely are assumed to be academically deficient and then demonized for their angry reactions to those biased assumptions. Resentful of a system that blithely dismisses their potential, many black boys eventually become alienated from scholastic activity. A recent study found that only 38 percent of Chicago's black males have graduated from high school since 1995.

These uneducated youth are the raw material of the prison-industrial complex. Lacking marketable skills, they flock to the ruthless underground economy of drug commerce where they are easily siphoned into the "injustice" system—victims of the drug war. Some also become victims of lethal gun violence—homicide remains the leading cause of death for young black men.

Unless we strenuously intervene to better the prospects of African-American men, who incidentally comprise about one-eighth of the earth's entire population of prison inmates, we may just be accomplices

As we limp into the 21st century, a gender gap is rending the fabric of the entire African-American community.

SALIM MUWAKKIL is a senior editor at *In These Times*, a contributing columnist to the *Chicago Tribune* and a *Crime and Communities Media Fellow* of the *Open Society Institute*.



The First Stone *By Joel Bleifuss*

'We determine who are our friends and who are our enemies according to whether they help U.S. imperialism or fight to defeat it.'

Vietnam veterans march at the 1972 Democratic convention in Miami.



Making Enemies

NAOMI KLEIN'S MAY 23 essay "How to End the War in Iraq," which was adapted from her remarks at an Institute for Policy Studies teach-in, got a lot of people excited. On www.inthesetimes.com, her essay has so far generated 566 comments. The most prominent response, however, was from the Counterpunch Web site where Michael Neumann, a philosophy professor at Trent University in Ontario, Canada, excoriated Klein (www.counterpunch.org/neumann05102005.html).

Klein called for us to have, in the words of Susan Sontag, "the courage to be serious," writing:

We need to support the people of Iraq and their clear demands for an end to both military and corporate occupation. That means

being the resistance ourselves in our country, demanding that the troops come home ... It doesn't mean blindly cheerleading for 'the resistance.' Because there isn't just one resistance in Iraq. Some elements of the armed resistance are targeting Iraqi civilians as they pray in Shia mosques—barbaric acts that serve the interests of the Bush administration by feeding the perception that the country is on the brink of civil war and therefore U.S. forces must remain in Iraq. ... [W]e need to stay focused on supporting the demands for self-determination, not cheering any setback for U.S. empire.

Neumann, incensed by what Klein had said, wrote in part:

The courage to be serious would mean something quite different. It would mean, not this bloodless, venti-decaf-latte substitute for

passion, but real hatred of America's actions and single-minded, furious determination to get every last 'coalition' soldier off Iraqi soil, as soon as possible, by any means necessary. ... Trying [to end the war] involves real, angry, nasty opposition, something a government might be concerned about. It cannot be built on a demand for withdrawal hedged with cherry picking among which Iraqis 'give us our marching orders.' Real opposition requires something beyond reasoned persuasion; the utter impotence of the utterly reasonable left has shown as much. ... The courage to be serious also means not 'supporting our troops.' This support really has become obnoxious. ... We make patronizing excuses for 'our' soldiers: they are poor, ignorant, oppressed, deceived by recruiters, they are cannon-fodder, they are everything that has formed the

backbone of evil armies since the dawn of history. They are everything, that is, but adults, responsible for their decisions. As a consequence of these decisions, they have come thousands of miles to kill and mutilate people who did them no harm. ... The courage to be serious means the courage to make hard choices. Do we have it?

In short, then, the enemy of my enemy is my friend.

The basic thrust of what Neuman is saying is not demonstrably different from what the soon-to-be Weathermen were saying in June 1969, at the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) convention in Chicago. There, they effectively derailed the student/national antiwar movement by championing a sectarian, "more radical than thou" form of politics. SDS, which at the time had a membership of 100,000, soon disintegrated.

The Weathermen manifesto, "You don't need a weatherman to know which way the wind blows," made this central point: "We determine who are our friends and who are our enemies according to whether they help U.S. imperialism or fight to defeat it."

Substitute "U.S. imperialism" for "a degenerate church of England" and you have 17th Century American Puritan thought in its secular form. While neo-puritanism will never gain political traction, it does make the believer feel good and righteous. This is not to say that U.S. imperialism should not be opposed or that righteousness has no place in politics. It it should and it does. However, "reasoned persuasion" that speaks to the public also has a place in politics and that is something that Klein provided and Neumann did not.

As the antiwar movement mobilizes for "three massive days of action" set to begin on September 24 in Washington,

D.C., it should heed the lessons of 1969 when "real, angry, nasty opposition" carried the day. And a good place to start would be to refrain from Reaganesque characterizations of U.S. soldiers as "evil armies."

Finger politics

In May, Indra Nooyi, the Indian-born president of Pepsi, gave the commencement speech at Columbia University's business school and spoke about the virtues of world cooperation. She began by asking the graduates to consider their hands, and drew an analogy of the five fingers representing the five major continents. She said in part:

Consider our little finger. Think of this finger as Africa ... From an economic standpoint, Africa has yet to catch up with her sister continents. And yet when our little finger hurts, it affects the whole hand. Our thumb is Asia: strong, powerful and ready to assert herself as a major player on the world's economic stage. Our index, or pointer finger, is Europe. Europe is the cradle of democracy and pointed the way for Western Civilization ... The ring finger is South America ... This analogy of the five fingers as the five major continents leaves the long, middle finger for North America, and in particular, the United States. ... What is most crucial to my analogy of the five fingers as the five major continents is that each of us in the U.S.—long middle finger—must be careful that when we extend our arm in either a business or political sense, we take pains to assure we are giving a hand ... not the finger. ... Unfortunately, I think this is how the rest of the world looks at the U.S. right now. Not as part of the hand—giving strength and purpose to the rest of the fingers—but, instead, scratching our nose and sending a far different signal.

Call in the thought police. Graduate Wes Martin alerted PowerLine, the right-wing blog, to Nooyi's heresy.

Demands for a Pepsi boycott ensued and Nooyi apologized for having "hurt good, caring people." As Martin explained to the *New York Sun*, "My family had flown a great distance and spent a great deal of money to come and celebrate a once in a lifetime opportunity and were disturbed that the president and CFO of a U.S.-based company made such a comparison at a business school ceremony."

I spy

The core point of contention between the Bush administration and Senate Democrats over the nomination of John Bolton as U.N. ambassador involves 10 intelligence reports prepared by the National Security Agency that contain the names of 19 Americans—names the administration is refusing to reveal. Bolton, in his position as undersecretary of state for arms control, requested the intelligence reports and Bolton's critics wonder if that list of names includes some of his many "enemies" in the State Department. According to Steve Clemens of TheWashingtonNote.com, one of the names in the intelligence reports is William Burns, the assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern affairs. Clemens notes, "This shows that Bolton was in fact spying on his colleagues and their work."

Puppet on a string

As a high school band played in downtown Princess Anne, Md., Republican Gov. Robert L. Ehrlich stepped up to the mike: "We are here to enthusiastically veto a bad piece of public policy." He then vetoed a bill passed by Maryland legislators that would have required private companies with more than 10,000 employees to spend 8 percent of their payroll on health care benefits or fund the state program that provides health services to the poor by an

equivalent amount. The only company in Maryland with more than 10,000 employees is Wal-Mart, some of whose workers rely on Medicaid. Standing at the governor's side as he signed the veto was Wal-Mart Chief Operating Officer Eduardo Castro-Wright, whose company held a fundraiser for Ehrlich last year. Similar legislation is being considered in Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

A "censored" election story

Project Censored has named "A Corrupted Election" by Steve Freeman and Josh Mitteldorf one of the 25 most under-reported stories of the year. In their March 14 article for *In These Times*, Freeman and Mitteldorf wrote: "Although President Bush prevailed by 3 million votes in the official, tallied vote count, exit polls had projected a margin of victory of 5 million votes for Kerry. This unexplained 8 million vote discrepancy between the election night exit polls and the official count should raise a Chinese May Day of red flags." Readers interested in this story should check out *Was the 2004 Presidential Election Stolen?*, forthcoming from Seven Stories Press, co-authored by Freeman and yours truly.

Welcome contributions

For those of you who are not regular readers of the *In These Times* masthead, we ask you to join us and extend a welcome to new Contributing Editors Dean Baker, Frida Berrigan, Phyllis Eckhaus, Christopher Hayes, Hans Johnson, David Lindorff, James Parker, Jehan-gir Pocha, Silja J.A. Talvi and Adam Werbach, all of whom contribute regularly to these pages. On another *In These Times* note, and apropos to this issue's editorial, "Move Over, Boomers," the median age of

ENVIRONMENTALISM IS DEAD.



WHAT'S NEXT?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Environmentalism

Canary in the Coal Mine?

BY ADAM WERBACH

WHEN THE U.S. SENATE voted to allow drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge this past March, a casual observer might have expected the leaders of the environmental movement to curl up into the fetal position and start making plans to build their own personal arks. Instead, within hours, e-mails from the leaders of the nation's environmental groups quickly spread out to their members, announcing their defeat.

"I am not going to soft-pedal today's defeat," wrote John Adams to the Natural Resource Defense Council's mailing list. "It is distressing that pro-oil forces, significantly strengthened by last November's election, were able to pass this terrible bill in the Senate, where we've blocked them before." Similar sentiment was echoed by John Flicker, president of the National Audubon Society, who wrote this to his staff and board: "Over the last several years we have faced one challenge after another defending the Refuge, including a similar vote in the last Congress which we won."

Decidedly missing from environmental leaders' post-defeat e-mails, however, was any admission that it was time to go back to the drawing board.

A vaguely post-coital glow emanated from conservatives in the wake of their 2004 electoral victories, which had given them the leverage to trounce the greatest symbol of America's uncompleted environmental agenda. Since the 1980 passage of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge—the 1.5 million acre area that comprises the breeding ground of the Porcupine Caribou Herd—had been left in limbo. With the highly symbolic battle over the Arctic Refuge won, conservatives are now free to kick-start America's nuclear power binge, expand coal-bed methane mining in the Rocky Moun-

tain West and ensure that no serious efforts to combat global warming will ever see the light of day.

The loss of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is yet one more piece of evidence that environmentalism, as a political movement, is exhausted. The signs of environmentalism's death are all around us. Environmentalists speak in terms of technical policies, not vision and values. Environmentalists propose 20th century solutions to 21st century problems. Environmentalists are failing to attract young people, the physical embodiment of the future, to our cause. Environmentalists are failing to attract the disenfranchised, the disempowered, the dispossessed and the disengaged. Environmentalists treat our rigid mental categories of what is "environmental" and what is not as things rather than as social and political tools to organize the public. Most of all, environmentalism is no longer capable of generating the power it needs to deal with the world's most serious ecological problem—namely, global warming.

Over the past year, I, along with Michael Shellenberger, Ted Nordhaus and Peter Teague, whose work appears on these pages, have made the argument that environmentalism is dead in America. The purpose of describing the environmental movement as dead is to allow the space for a new movement to grow—a new movement that does not set arbitrary limitations for what is considered an "environmental issue," in service of building a larger progressive movement.

It's time for environmentalists to step outside the limits of an artificially narrow discourse to articulate a more expansive, more inclusive and more compelling vision for the future. In doing so, they will cease to be environmentalists and start to become American progressives.

The problems facing environmentalists are not unique to environmentalism. The failure of the environmental move-

The Pig People Don't Talk to the Chicken People

BY PETER TEAGUE

It was three years ago, when I first came to work in a New York foundation, that I learned that the pig people don't talk to the chicken people. "You guys are working on the same problems, with the same root causes," I said. "So why don't you work together?" The challenges they were tackling seemed similar: factory farming, mountains of waste, the domination of little guys by the big guys. But that's not how they acted. I soon learned that the pig people and the chicken people don't talk to the cow people either, and the cow people have never talked with the people worried about over-grazing, or breast cancer or the war in Iraq.

And so it goes in progressive America today. We are oriented towards problems, issues and complaints. Our politics are defined by fragmentation rather than unity. To the extent that we think beyond what and who we are not, we tend to focus on the things that separate us: issues, identities, demographics and geography. We then organize ourselves into ever-narrower fragments with rigid categorical boundaries.

Why? I'll venture to name a few reasons:

- ◆ The mistaken belief that things get more manageable the more narrowly we focus on them.
- ◆ The mistaken belief that people act in their rational self-interest (as we define it) if given appropriate facts.
- ◆ Hostility to new ideas.
- ◆ Failure to question basic assumptions and orthodoxies.
- ◆ Fear of imagining plausible alternatives.
- ◆ We have forgotten who we are.

We have a pretty great story to tell. The country was founded by progressives and it is progressives who have struggled to make it better. They fought to abolish slavery, enfranchise women and end child labor. The progressive impulse brought down the original robber barons, and reined in corporate greed. Progressives came up with an authentic response to the Great Depression and coaxed the country to confront the dangers of institutionalized racism. Even now, in our weakened state, we are the ones pressing for an economy that works for everyone; a democracy that honors equality and respects human rights; a foreign policy that values global interdependence over unilateralism and peace over war; and for vital communities and the right relationship to the earth that sustains us.

But somehow we've lost the narrative thread



JIM LAURIE

ment is symptomatic of the failure of most liberal social movements, including the labor, civil rights and women's movements. All have failed to build an aspirational narrative for America.

For at least the last 25 years, environmentalists have joined American liberals in defining themselves according to a set of problems, whether they be class, race, gender or the environment. We have spent far less time defining ourselves according to the values that unite us, such as shared prosperity, social progress, interdependence, fairness, increasing equality and ecological restoration. We can no longer afford to allow the laundry list of liberal "-isms" to divide our world. I have come to believe that our future successes will come not from our ability to shock, but to inspire.

The mother of all environmentalists

Modern environmentalism was born in the early '60s in the form of scientist and writer Rachel Carson. Carson offered what was at the time an astounding thesis: The chemicals that were supposed to be protecting us were in fact threatening to kill us. Carson identified the chemical pesticide DDT in weakened egg shells of arctic birds, and used

this evidence to promote removing injurious chemicals from our world. Her strategy was to awaken the public by contrasting a dream of the present to a nightmare of the future, and her solutions were framed in the negative—a world without pesticides, without life-killing substances. The proposals that followed were technical policy fixes for regulating poisons and pollutants, but they lacked an overarching narrative grounded in core American values. This technical tradition, which was powerfully successful in the early days of environmentalism, formed the basis for modern environmentalism.

Instead of supporting a broad-based movement that employed the key lessons of ecology—that all things are connected—environmentalists chose to define their field of vision narrowly. Birds were an environmental issue, air quality was an environmental issue, but economic policy was not.

Environmentalists promoted a regulatory paradigm, not a narrative for the country's success. While liberals were defining themselves in opposition to the problems that were besetting a modernizing America, conservatives began to construct a movement that envisioned an optimistic America that would appear better and stronger than ever.

Unraveling the structural weak-

nesses of environmentalism requires an understanding of the language and categories that environmentalists, and therefore the American people, use to describe the environment. If environmentalism stresses interdependence on the one hand and "things," on the other, there's little doubt that it's the things that the American people have been taught to associate with the words "the environment": baby seals, redwoods, Yellowstone and nuclear waste.

Some of the things they have been taught not to think of when they think of the environment are AIDS in Africa, taxes, highways, homeless people, asthma, good jobs and the war in Iraq. Each of those things—"environmental" or not—are stripped by American environmentalism of their native habitat, their context and their web of connections. They are single "issues," each requiring its own movement, its own experts and its own funding source.

All categories and words should be understood as tools, not as symbols of real things. This was the simple point made by Ferdinand de Saussure at the dawn of the semiotics movement. Categories—indeed, all of language—should be evaluated not for their timeless ability to represent a truth that, like the fiction of nature, is "out there," but rather for their ability to meet our present needs.

A reasonable case can be made that environmental activists needed to put baby seals, redwoods, Yellowstone and nuclear waste under the brand of “environmentalism” in order to pass a raft of environmental laws in the ’70s. With the support of the American people, the Congress and even Richard Nixon, the environmental movement was able to pass the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, the Endangered Species Act, and the National Environmental Policy Act, which created the Environmental Protection Agency.

But for at least 25 years, and maybe longer, the basic categorical assumptions that underlie environmentalism have inhibited the movement’s ability to consider opportunities outside environmental boundaries that would allow American progressives to compete more effectively with conservatives.

Consider that the environmental movement achieved its greatest successes before it had hundreds of lobbyists, communications experts and policy wonks, before organizations had paid memberships of millions of people. The idea of cleaning the smoky

skies and cleaning the water was powerful, immediate and achievable. In retrospect, the decision to fund sewage systems in America’s cities and to protect America’s rare wildlife seems obvious. But along with the victories of the ’70s, the environmental movement learned lessons that it has failed to unlearn as the political context changed over the years.

Michael Shellenberger and Ted Nordhaus described the process of environmental policy-making in the October 2004 paper, *The Death of Environmentalism* (excerpted in part on p. 21):

The three-part strategic framework for environmental policy-making hasn’t changed in 40 years: first, define a problem (e.g. global warming) as “environmental.” Second, craft a technical remedy (e.g., cap-and-trade). Third, sell the technical proposal to legislators through a variety of tactics, such as lobbying, third-party allies, research reports, advertising and public relations.

By the American bicentennial, this kind of environmentalism had triumphed. Sweeping protections were put

that ties it all together. We have to learn to tell a better story. We have to be bold and inspiring, to shift our orientation from problems to solutions. We have to understand that the values environment in which we are operating is increasingly hostile to the progressive project. And we have to learn how to navigate in that environment as we seek to transform it over time.

We need a politics in which the current parties’ agendas become irrelevant and both Democrats and Republicans are forced to govern as progressives, in the same way that both parties are now forced to govern as conservatives. Electoral politics are ultimately an expression of underlying cultural dynamics. Long-term cultural transformation, therefore, must be the first priority, with electoral politics as one vehicle we can use to achieve that goal.

This is all achievable, but we don’t have much time. Scientists roll out one horrifying scenario after another about the imminent collapse of natural systems. And we can’t wish away the fact that a growing number of lunatics have weapons of mass destruction.

What’s really amazing is that current political discourse—and the media that promote it—carries on as if these facts don’t matter. The world could end and we’d still be talking about which politician is more God-fearing, whether Michael Jackson is a pederast, or what GM’s share price is on the Dow Jones.

And there’s the opening. We have the chance to be relevant because no one else is being relevant.

When we stop worrying about a lot of seemingly separate problems, we begin to realize that there are people out there who are thinking seamlessly and brilliantly, taking action to transform corporations, coming up with whole new ways of conceptualizing problems and imagining solutions.

Civil rights leaders in California, for example, are proposing public investment in a clean energy economy as a solution to the mass imprisonment of young African-American and Latino men and other deeply rooted problems affecting our inner cities. A small but growing number of corporate leaders are coming to understand that the whole system must be turned away from its blind and mechanical drive for profit. And we are building a critical mass of progressives who are re-orienting their work, appealing to shared values, speaking to aspiration and offering solutions instead of problems.

Something nascent and powerful is happening out there. We need to keep watching, trusting our intuition and nurturing it as it opens. ■

PETER TEAGUE is the director of the Environment Program at the Nathan Cummings Foundation. The views expressed in this article are his own.



LIONEL J.M. DELEVINGNE

in place, and the focus was now as much on implementation through the courts as it was on new legislation in Congress.

But while environmentalists turned their attention toward the courts, the American people no longer related to environmentalism's goals. Support for environmental protection since the '70s has been notoriously shallow. Although roughly three-quarters of all Americans currently identify as environmentalists, or pledge support for environmental goals and laws, environmental issues rarely make it into the top 10 list of things voters worry about the most.

It's not surprising; the environmentalism that most Americans understand—the protection of things like clean air and bald eagles—has been absorbed by American culture. In 1970, environmentalism was a radical issue. Today, Exxon-Mobil touts their protection of sea creatures, President Bush dons jeans and a plaid shirt on Earth Day and recycling is taught to children soon after potty training. Environmentalism has failed to explain how recycling and species protection are only the beginning of a new mode of integrated thinking. The key lesson of environmentalism, instead of the protection of things, is the practice of ecology—the study of interdependence. When the Sierra Club boycotted Shell Oil because of its human rights record in Nigeria, not because of its pollution, the organization demonstrated this type of integrated thinking. When environmentalists advocate immigration control as a means of “protecting”

America's environment, they demonstrate their loyalty to “thing-oriented” environmentalism. This type of environmentalism has now run its course, and the American people have found other issues to care about.

Environmental leaders freely acknowledge that their “issue”—this thing we call “the environment”—is not a major priority for Americans. When pressed to choose between two candidates, environmental concerns are rarely a deciding factor. This was especially apparent in the campaign

leading up to last November's elections. Only a few environmental organizations even entered the political arena.

The environmental groups that did enter the political debate spent millions of dollars on TV ads and grassroots mobilization. Yet they had little effect on the outcome of the election. Why? They largely focused on their “issues” rather than on techniques that would have had a greater effect. The National Rifle Association, on the other hand, ran ads in pro-gun-control districts in Colorado on the issue of taxes.

Despite these failures, the lesson many environmental leaders are taking from the election is that we must talk louder and fight harder—with the same words and the same tools.

Competing identities and issues

Environmentalists aren't the only ones clinging to an identity separate from progressivism. Each of liberalism's special interests has its own experts, its own professionals, its own lobbyists, its own lawyers, its own funders, its own mailing lists and its own journalistic beat. The more that each fights to establish itself as “above politics,” the more each reinforces its special-interest status. In seeking to distinguish the interest categories, each group looks askance at the other, as though any association—any interconnectedness—with other progressives would diminish their special powers.

The picture for progressives, in this context, seems grim. But if there's one lesson to learn from conservatives, it's that moments of defeat are an opportunity for a turnaround.

Forty years ago, things also looked grim for conservatives.

Their debates over conservatism foreshadowed our debates today over liberalism. Should conservatives moderate their views and become Democrat-lite? Should they embrace a kinder, gentler New Deal? Or did they need to declare the death of conservatism so they could build a neo-conservative movement? Like liberals today, conservatives wrung their hands over these debates, fret-

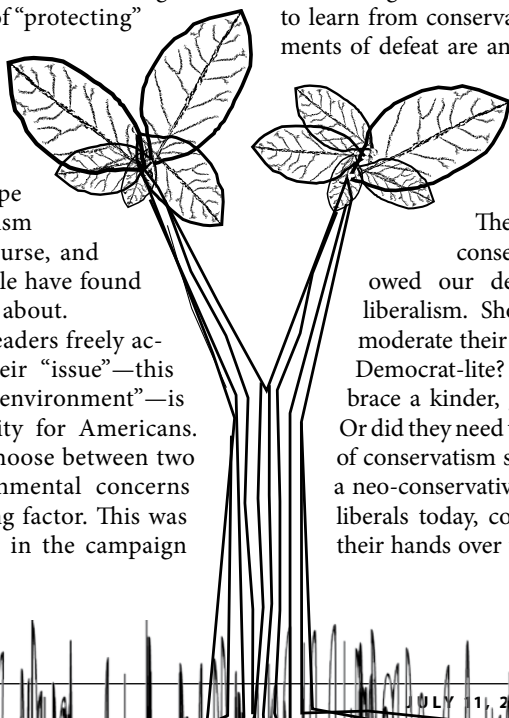
ting that the “circular firing squads” would lead to permanent minority status.

It's been months since the elections, and there is still no real debate among liberals and Democrats about what went wrong, not just with Kerry's campaign, but with liberalism and all of its sister-isms. Liberals pulled out all of the stops in their election efforts, yet it was not nearly enough to counter the growing trend in America's conservative social values. In order to start winning elections, we need to construct an aspirational ideology as powerful as liberalism once was, and as powerful as fundamentalism is today. We need to accept that the needs of most Americans have changed since the dawn of American liberalism. Technological change, credit debt, depression and time-stress are the modern American plagues. Life is still not easy in America, and people still suffer, but the optics have changed. We need to construct a new progressive ideology that recognizes that Americans yearn for an ideology that provides a deeper fulfillment, instead of focusing solely on enhancing our political tactics.

Many in our movements preach the value of free speech, open dialogue and debate, yet as soon as somebody challenges our most basic assumptions, or dares to level a public criticism at the liberal powers-that-be, they are barked down. When we're simultaneously losing on nearly every one of our so-called “issues”—abortion, civil rights, the environment, the economy, foreign policy—questioning everything should no longer be our right, it should be our responsibility.

The problem is not that environmentalism and the moral intellectual framework we call liberalism are dead. The problem is that we have been in denial about it for more than 20 years. The sooner we acknowledge these deaths, the sooner we can give birth to something more powerful and relevant. ■

ADAM WERBACH is a former national president of the Sierra Club and is launching *Orange: the Progressive Film Club* in December 2005 (www.progressivefilmclub.com). Parts of this article were adapted from Werbach's Commonwealth Club speech, “Is Environmentalism Dead?”



Global Warming Politics in a Post-Environmental World

BY MICHAEL SHELLENBERGER AND TED NORDHAUS

OVER THE LAST 15 YEARS, environmental foundations and organizations have invested hundreds of millions of dollars into combating global warming.

They have strikingly little to show for it.

From battles over higher fuel efficiency for cars and trucks to attempts to reduce carbon emissions through international treaties, environmental groups repeatedly have tried and failed to win national legislation to reduce the threat of global warming. Every environmental leader we interviewed recognizes that climate change demands that we remake the global economy in ways that will transform the lives of six billion people. All recognize that it's an undertaking of monumental size and complexity

And yet not one of North America's environmental leaders is publicly articulating a vision of the future commensurate with the magnitude of the crisis. Instead they are promoting technical policy fixes like pollution controls and higher vehicle mileage standards—proposals that provide neither the popular inspiration nor the political power needed to deal with the problem. Green groups are defining the problem so narrowly—so unecologically—that they have alienated potential allies and become just another special interest.

Environmental leaders are today like generals fighting the last war—in particular the war they fought and won for basic environmental protections more than 30 years ago. It was then that the community's political strategy became defined around using science to define various problems as “environmental” and various solutions as technical.

The problem with environmentalism goes deeper than better communication, language or framing. The problem goes to the way environmentalists conceptualize the problem. Environmental leaders have persuaded themselves that it's their job to worry about “environmental” problems and that it's the labor movement's job to worry about “labor” problems.

The problem isn't just that environmentalism has become a special interest. The problem is that all liberal politics have become special interests.

Now is the moment—35 years after the modern environmental movement was born—for the environmental community to take a step back, rethink its fundamental assumptions, get clear about its vision for America and the world and invent a radically different strategy for achieving it. ■



DAVID MCNEW/GETTY IMAGES

No More of the Same

BY ADAM WERBACH



“The Death of Environmentalism—Global Warming Politics in a Post-Environmental World,” by Michael Shellenberger and Ted Nordhaus, excerpted on the left, was released at the October 2004 Environmental Grantmakers Association conference in Hawaii. It has been discussed in publications ranging from the New York Times to The Economist.

The two are founding partners of American Environics, a research and strategy company. Their book, The Death of Environmentalism and the Birth of a New Aspirational Politics, will be published by Houghton Mifflin in Fall 2006. In early June, I interviewed Nordhaus and Shellenberger via e-mail about what has happened since its release. Our discussion follows:



Let's start with the generational politics that seem to be just below the surface of much of the death of environmentalism debate. Do you believe that baby boomers bear the lion's share of responsibility for the dearth of leadership in the environmental movement? What should these leaders do now? Die?

SHELLENBERGER: Honestly, we didn't give much thought to generational politics until Sierra Club Executive Director Carl Pope accused us of "patricide" in his response to "The Death of Environmentalism." But the more we thought about it, the more we're inclined to agree that there is a generational divide. Those of our generation, particularly on the left, grew up in the shadow of the baby boom and its politics. Unfortunately, the single-interest, complaint-based model of social change invented by the baby boomers in the early '70s is outmoded. We recognize and are grateful for their contribution—and we're ready to move on.

Look where we're at: The ecological crises we face today—global warming, species extinction, habitat destruction, to name a few—are far more complex, global, and requiring of deeper changes in the economy than the issues the environmental movement was created to address 40 years ago. And yet environmentalists haven't reconceptualized these problems nor revamped their politics. As a consequence, environmentalists are weaker today than at any point in recent American history.

What has happened to America since the defeat of Barry Goldwater?

If your social values data your new company is working from is correct, the conservative political trend we're experiencing reflects a conservative trend in American social values. Wasn't the implication of Abraham Maslow's work that once a society's basic material needs are achieved it grows to be increasingly open and liberal?

NORDHAUS: Remember that real income for a huge number of American households has been declining since the early '70s. The shift toward survival oriented values that we see in our research partly reflects dramatic structural changes in the economy—changes that began with the oil shocks of the early '70s, have continued with the rise of the global economy, and have been aided and abetted by conservative ideas about regulation and taxation—ideas that have been largely implemented at a policy level over the last 25 years as conservatives consolidated their political power. We suspect that a Darwinian, dog-eat-dog economy begets dog-eat-dog, survival-oriented values.

What lessons do you think that Democrats learned from the 2004 election defeat?

NORDHAUS: Sadly, very little. Most Democrats and progressives think we just need to do more of the same. With better strategies, better tactics, a few more religious leaders and movie stars here, another \$100 million for ACT there, some better words and frames in our press releases they hope to muddle through.

But we all know that the old ways in which we measured success are not sufficient. We have spent 20 years, and enormous resources, fighting a rear guard battle to protect the successes of liberalism and environmentalism. How much proof will we require that we're losing before we take a hard look at what we are doing and, as importantly, who we are, and dramatically transform our politics and our movement?

The arguments that you've made for environmentalism are largely applicable to the other social movements of liberalism. How does a women's movement that's now focused on defending access to abortions turn on its heels and start fighting the underlying social values trends that are making them stumble?

SHELLENBERGER: All the liberal single-issue movements need to challenge their basic assumptions about what the problem is that they're trying to address, and develop a relevant vision for America and the world.

We need to ask some hard questions of our politics. What is the alternative to complaint-based politics? How do we decide what gets counted as an "environmental" or a "women's" or a "foreign policy" issue? What gets left out of those categories—and what political opportunities might exist in what's been left out?

Is access to abortion really the central reproductive issue facing the country? Why does abortion dominate the discussion?

Why, for instance, has no progressive group succeeded in injecting the idea of a motherhood bill of rights—where we literally pay women to stay home to raise their children, or get tax credits for day care—into contested political space? How did progressive groups allow the right to kill comprehensive sex-ed and replace it with abstinence-only?

As soon as you start thinking outside of the "abortion" or "environment" or "peace" boxes a whole world of political opportunity opens up.

There's a cottage industry in trying to build a replica of the conservative media and political infrastructure for progressives. Do you think we need to be looking at other models, like corporate turnarounds?

SHELLENBERGER: There are certainly very important lessons we can draw from the corporate world, especially from the few great corporations that are vision and values-focused rather than product- and market-focused.

The talk of progressives since the November defeat has been about the need to build a progressive "infrastructure" to match the conservative "message machine." That's fine as far as it goes—but our problems go way beyond message, framing and mechanics.

All this talk about "infrastructure" risks fetishizing the conserva-



U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE/GETTY IMAGES

tive movement and missing the important intellectual work that conservatives started doing in the '50s and '60s to create a values-based politics. It also misses the way conservatives exploited race as a fault line in the culture, marginalized the old, integrationist elements of the GOP and weaved together economic fundamentalism with religious fundamentalism.

We have yet to see progressives and Democrats really grappling with cultural and political realignment. Instead, what you see is the same old tug-of-war within the party between those who want to see the party move to the "left" and those who want it to move to the "center." These debates operate along a largely irrelevant political fault line, which is not very interesting intellectually and certainly won't result in any political breakthroughs.



Do you get tired of being derided and dismissed by many mainstream environmental leaders?

NORDHAUS: We didn't expect to be embraced with open arms. Of course, it's never easy to have people angry with you or question your intentions, but we felt that what we said had to be said.

I think much of the distress over "Death of" is emblematic of how unaccustomed the left has become to public debate. There was a time in America when you looked to the left, not the right, for vigorous debate over ideas. That's no longer the case. One of the great myths among progressives is that conservatives are monolithic and unified. It's simply not the case. There are important differences—fought out publicly—among religious conservatives, free market-libertarians, blue-blood Republicans and neocons. We ignore their differences—and try to shut down debate on our side—at our peril.



I also think it's a sign of the intellectual flabbiness among progressives that the central criticism being directed at us for writing "Death of" is that some people's feelings were hurt. Never mind the ecological, cultural and political crises we're facing—people's feelings were hurt!

One of the most positive things that happened since we wrote "Death of" is the huge number of young people—from junior staff in environmental and conservation organizations to college students—who have contacted us, asking to be involved in building a post-environmental movement. We're hosting a retreat for a small group of these young people to come together next November.

The readers of In These Times are a discerning crowd. What are the questions they should be asking to discover if the social movement they care about needs to die and be reborn?

SHELLENBERGER: To get back to the generational question, America in 2005 looks quite different from 1975, yet the way progressives do politics is essentially unchanged. We need to challenge ourselves to renovate our thinking and our politics.

What kind of country do we want? What is America great at—and how do we build on that to overcome our challenges? How can we work with other countries to build on our collective strengths? How is globalization a good thing, and how do we make it more so?

The big question we need to ask ourselves is, what vision and values and program should animate a new progressive infrastructure? To answer these questions we have to stop conflating

"This is a revelatory book for these chaotic times." —STUDS TERKEL

"The Long Detour is THE necessary book for progressives who still believe that the good fight can be won."
—JOHN NICHOLS, *The Nation*

"Learned, politically committed, lucid, and controversial."
—ERIC FONER

"Lively and provocative, James Weinstein gives us the kind of narrative and analysis that is genuinely useful in our 21st century struggles."
—NELSON LICHTENSTEIN, author of *State of the Union: A Century of American Labor*

"Now that the Cold War is over and great ideological battles are exhausted, James Weinstein comes along to give us a smart, clear-eyed and readable account of what really happened to American socialism."
—WILLIAM GREIDER, national affairs correspondent, *The Nation*

The History and Future of the American Left

Detour

THE LONG JAMES WEINSTEIN

www.thelongdetour.com

WINTER 2005 \$10.00 (US) \$12.00 (CAN) \$14.00 (UK)
AT BOOKSTORES NOW, OR CALL 1-800-366-5426

CHEAP LAUGHS AT BUSH'S EXPENSE! SUBSCRIBE TO THE

HUMOR TIMES!

HILARIOUS POLITICAL CARTOONS, AS WELL AS HUMOR COLUMNS & NON-POLITICAL CARTOONS!

YES, FOR LESS THAN ONE NIGHT AT THE MOVIES, YOU CAN LAUGH ALL YEAR!

GO TO WWW.HUMORTIMES.COM OR SEND A CHECK OR MONEY ORDER FOR ONLY \$17.95 (FOR 2 ISSUES) TO:

Humor Times
P.O.B. 162429
Sacramento, CA 95816

ALSO... SAMPLE ISSUES CAN BE HAD FOR MERELY \$1.00 !!!

GEORGE LOVES IT WHEN I SHOW HIM THE PICTURES!

HUMOR TIMES — GOOD FOR AMERICA!

Battling Big Cola

Parents and health advocates fight to make sure Pepsi is *not* the choice of a new generation.

BY MARK WINNE



Professor Coke Machine teaches "Remedial Corporate Indoctrination" in high schools throughout the country.

TIM BOYLE/GETTY IMAGES

OVER THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS, public school districts have made deals with the likes of Pepsi-Cola and Coca-Cola to keep their school cafeterias operating in the black and to give school principals some extra cash to pay for things like band uniforms. But as one scientific report after another reveals the growing health risks of obesity—especially among children—parents, doctors and nutrition advocates across the nation are marching on their state capitols to demand change. They've come to kick out the cola.

Pepsi and Coke are not taking the challenge lying down. Using a page from Big Tobacco's playbook, Big Cola is pulling out all the stops in a desperate fight to halt state legislatures from enacting tough new nutrition standards for public schools. What's at stake for the soda companies? Millions of young consumers whose future brand loyalty will be embedded in their malleable cortexes. What's at stake for the rest of us? A medical bill for obesity-related illnesses that, according to the Center for Disease Control, now stands at \$93 billion per year, or 9.1 percent of all U.S. medical expenditures.

Connecticut is the most recent state where citizens have started wondering why their schools are being used as junk food feeding tubes. Under the leadership of Democratic State Senator Donald E. Williams, president pro tempore of the Connecticut Senate, and Lucy Nolan, executive director of End Hunger Connecticut!, both houses of the state legislature have passed by overwhelming margins the toughest school nutrition standards in the country. If Republican Governor M. Jodi Rell signs the bill (as *In These Times* went to press, a gubernatorial veto was possible), no child will be able to buy a sugary beverage in a Connecticut public school. Instead of agonizing over whether to push the Coke or Pepsi button on school vending machines, little Johnny will only be able to choose from bottled water, 100 percent fruit juice or unsweetened milk.

While Johnny may pout for a while, he may be pleased years later when he hasn't joined the ranks of the 65 percent of American adults who are now overweight. And Connecticut and U.S. taxpayers may also rejoice when the obesity-related illness portion of Medicaid and Medicare expenditures, which currently stands at \$665 million annually in Connecticut alone, begins to decline.

But as Williams and Nolan have learned, anyone who goes up against the carbonated commandos of Big Cola faces an uphill battle. In spite of a statewide opinion poll conducted by the Connecticut Center for Research and Analysis that

showed 70 percent of the state's citizens supporting a school soda ban, Pepsi-Cola and Coca-Cola have each hired the state's most powerful and connected lobbyists to fight the reform efforts. With combined lobbying fees that approach \$150,000 (a small portion of which is also being used to defeat yet another soda industry nemesis, a stricter bottle return law), Big Cola's hired guns have been stalking the halls of Connecticut's state capitol, disseminating misinformation and dissembling the issue. Like Iago whispering into the ear of Othello, they have told legislators that the food and beverage menu of local schools is none of their business. According to Nolan, they are saying that what children eat should only be decided by school boards and parents. They have even gone as far as to suggest that state government is disempowering children by taking away their opportunity to buy junk food in school.

Big Cola succeeded in obfuscating the issue so well that Connecticut's House of Representatives debated the soda ban for an astounding eight hours—far more time than they devoted to any other issue this session, including the nation's first legislatively authorized same-sex civil union bill and a failed attempt to outlaw state executions. End Hunger's Nolan, a mother of three school-age children, credits Williams for standing strong in the face of unrelenting lobbying pressure. "You have to be willing to go up against the state's toughest lobbyist," Nolan says. "Just look at how much money they spent!"

Such resolve doesn't appear to be the forthcoming in this year's Oregon legislature. Mary Lou Hennrich, director of the Community Health Partnership, is leading a group of health organizations, medical associations and academics called the Oregon Nutrition Policy Alliance. Together, they put forward legislation to reform the state's school food environment with a special emphasis on reducing the availability of unhealthy food. When the advocates made a few technical missteps, Big Cola immediately started sowing the seeds of discontent. "They went around to school food service directors and local officials telling them they shouldn't let state government tell them what to do," Hennrich says. Big Cola even had the chutzpah to bring in a school board official from Eugene who testified against the healthy school food bill. It turned out that he was also the president of a local Pepsi bottling company. According to Hennrich, the bill is now in serious trouble.

Joy Johanson, senior policy associate at



Students at Jones College Prep in Chicago eat lunch before a bank of vending machines.

TIM BOYLE/GETTY IMAGES

the Washington, D.C.-based Center for Science in the Public Interest, has seen this pattern time and again. She points out that the food and beverage industry has become quite adept at playing a game of semantics that disorients overworked state legislators and confuses the general public. For instance, the word "ban," as in "soda ban," has been translated by Big Cola to mean that Big Brother is treading on your civil liberties.

"The local control message that keeps surfacing throughout this debate," Johanson says, "is not coming from parents or even particularly from local school authorities; it's coming from Coke." She notes that 90 percent of all local school districts don't have a certified nutrition professional on staff, which means that a state-level person qualified to make decisions based on the best scientific information is a boost to local schools, not a hindrance as Big Cola suggests. Of course, no one complains when state boards of education require a minimum number of courses in English and math to earn a high school diploma, or when the federal government demands compliance with "No Child Left Behind."

"Healthy school food has become a politically contentious issue when it should be a bipartisan one," Johanson says. "After all, we're talking about our children's health."

But even when Big Cola knows it has to retreat, it finds a way to fight a successful rearguard action. After a hard-fought battle in this year's New Mexico legislature, pediatricians, school food directors and nutritionists managed to secure legislative

consent for an expert committee with the authority to establish nutrition standards for schools. But there was a cost. The legislature required that the committee members include representatives of the beverage and food industry. In other words, Big Cola convinced the legislature that the fox should join the chicken coop's security guard.

A 20-ounce bottle of Coke contains no less than 16 teaspoons of sugar. Today, 56 to 85 percent of children consume at least one soda daily in school, in spite of the fact that the American Academy of Pediatrics has declared that soda should not be sold in schools—period. Yet Big Cola and its hired guns are spending millions of dollars at all levels of government to retain what they claim as their right, and presumably that of local schools, to give children their daily sugar fix.

It's not that children aren't otherwise bombarded with consumer messages—on television, at the mall and from their peers. It's just that maybe public schools should offer a sanctuary from life as one big commercial.

Marion Nestle, a professor of nutrition at New York University, put it this way: "There needs to be one place in society where children feel that their needs come first—not their future as consumers. In American society today, schools are the only option. That's why every aspect of school food matters so much." ■

MARK WINNE is a freelance writer who covers food, nutrition and agriculture issues. He can be reached by email at win5m@aol.com.



TERRY LABAN

Thanks, But We'll Do It Ourselves

Against enlightened administration.

BY SLAVOJ ŽIŽEK

AMISH COMMUNITIES ROUTINELY practice the institution of *rum-springa* (from the German *herumspringen*, to jump around). At 17, their children (who until then have been subjected to strict family discipline) are set free and allowed, solicited even, to go out and experience the ways of the “American” world around them. They drive cars, listen to pop music, watch TV and get involved in drinking, drugs and wild sex. After a couple of years, they are expected to decide: Will they become members of the Amish community, or leave it and turn into ordinary American citizens? Far from allowing the

youngsters a truly free choice—that is, giving them a chance to decide based on the full knowledge and experience of both sides of the choice—such a solution is a fake choice if there ever was one. After long years of discipline and fantasizing about the illicit pleasures of the outside world, when the adolescent Amish are thrown into this world unprepared, they cannot but indulge in extremely transgressive behavior, gorging themselves fully on a life of sex, drugs and drinking. And since they have never had the chance to develop any self-regulation in such a life, the wholly new and permissive situation inexorably backlashes,

generating unbearable anxiety. Thus, it is a safe bet that, after a couple of years, they will return to the seclusion of their community. Indeed, 90 percent of the children do exactly that.

This is a perfect example of the difficulties that accompany the idea of a “free choice.” While Amish adolescents are formally given a free choice, the conditions they find themselves in while choosing make the choice “unfree.” In order for them to have a truly free choice, they would have to be properly informed of and educated about all their options. However, the only way to do this would

be to extract them from the Amish community, which would effectively render them American.

This deadlock also illustrates the problems with the standard liberal attitude toward Muslim women who wear veils: They can do it if it is their free choice and not an option imposed on them by their husbands or family. However, the moment women wear a veil as the result of their free choice (say, in order to realize their own spirituality), the meaning of wearing a veil changes completely. For liberals, it is no longer a sign of their belonging to the Muslim community, but an expression of their idiosyncratic individuality. The difference is the same as the one between a Chinese farmer eating Chinese food because his village has done so from time immemorial and a citizen of a Western megalopolis deciding to go and have dinner at a local Chinese restaurant.

A choice is thus always a “meta-choice,” a choice that simultaneously defines and is defined by the conditions of the choice itself. It is only the woman who does not choose to wear a veil who effectively makes a choice. This is why, in our secular societies of choice, people who maintain a substantial religious belonging are in a subordinate position. Even if they are allowed to maintain their belief, this belief is “tolerated” as an idiosyncratic personal choice or opinion. The moment they present it publicly as what it is for them (a matter of substantial belonging), they are deemed “fundamentalist.”

So what does all this have to do with the recent French (and then Dutch) vote of “No” to the European Constitution? *Everything*. The French voters were treated exactly like the Amish youngsters. They were not given a clear symmetrical choice. The very terms of the choice privileged the “Yes” vote. The elite proposed a choice that was effectively no choice at all—people were called to ratify the inevitable, the natural result of enlightened expertise. The media and political elite presented the choice as one between knowledge and ignorance, between expertise and ideology, between post-political administration and old political passions of the left and the right. The No was thus dismissed as a short-sighted fearful reaction to the emerging new postindustrial global order, an instinct to stick to and protect the comfortable Welfare State traditions—a gesture of refusal that lacked any positive alternative program. It is little wonder that the only political parties whose official stance was No were those at the extremes of the political spectrum: Le Pen’s Front Na-

tional on the right and the Communists and Trotskyists on the left. Furthermore, we’ve been told, the No was really a No to many other things: Anglo-Saxon neoliberalism, Chirac and the present French government, the influx of immigrant workers from Poland who lower the wages of the French workers, etc. (And before dismissing this last complaint as racist, one should keep in mind that this influx of immigrant workers is not the consequence of multicultural “tolerance.” It effectively is part of capital’s strategy to hold in check the demands of workers!)

However, even if there is an element of truth in all this, the very fact that the No was not sustained by a coherent alternative political vision is the strongest possible condemnation of the political and media elite, a monument to their inability to articulate and translate the people’s longings and dissatisfactions into a political vision. Instead, in their reaction to the No voters, they treated them as retarded pupils who did not get the lesson of the experts: Their self-criticism was that of the teacher who admits that he failed to properly educate his pupils.

So while the choice was not the choice between two political options, neither was it the choice between the enlightened vision of a modern Europe, ready to fit the new global order, and old confused political passions. When commentators described the No as a message of confused fear, they were wrong. The main fear was the fear that the refusal itself provoked in the new European political elite, the fear that people will no longer easily buy into their “post-political” vision. For all others, the No is a message and expression of hope—hope that Politics is still alive and possible, that the debate about what the new Europe shall and should be is still open. This is why those on the left should reject the sneering insinuation by liberals that, in our No, we found ourselves strange bedfellows with neo-Fascists. What the new populist right and the left share is precisely *this*: the awareness that Politics proper is still alive.

For in fact, there *was* a positive choice in the No: the choice of the choice itself, the rejection of the blackmail by the new elite that offered us only the choice to either confirm their expert knowledge or to display our “irrational” immaturity. The No vote is the positive decision to start a properly Political debate about what kind of Europe we really want. Late in his life, Freud asked the famous question “*Was will das Weib?*” (“What does Woman want?”), admitting his perplexity when faced with

the enigma of feminine sexuality. Doesn’t the imbroglio with the European Constitution bear witness to the same puzzlement: Which Europe do we want?

To put it bluntly, do we want to live in a world in which the only choice is between the American civilization and the emerging Chinese authoritarian-capitalist one? If the answer is no, then the only alternative is Europe. The Third World cannot generate a strong enough resistance to the ideology of the American Dream. In the present constellation, only Europe can do so. The true opposition today is not the one between the United States and the Third World, but the one between the whole of the American global Empire (and its Third World colonies) and Europe.


Theodor Adorno claimed that what we are getting in the contemporary “administered world” and its “repressive desublimation” is no longer the old logic of social authority’s repression of the Id (the individual’s illicit aggressive drives). Rather, we have a perverse pact between the punitive Superego’s legally sanctioned social authority and the Id’s illicit aggressive drives at the expense of the Ego’s rationality. Today, something structurally similar is going on at the political level. We have a weird pact between postmodern global capitalism and premodern societies at the expense of modernity proper. The United States is essentially “at home” in Third World countries, exploiting them (economically and culturally) in a true relationship of symbiosis: exporting high tech products and food, importing raw materials and the products of sweatshops, flooding them with U.S. pop culture and appropriating selected “authentic” aboriginal culture and arts. It is easy for the American multiculturalist global Empire to integrate premodern local traditions. The foreign body that it cannot effectively assimilate is European modernity.

So although the French and Dutch No is not sustained by a coherent and detailed alternative vision, it at least *clears the space for it*. This void demands to be filled with new projects—in contrast to the pro-Constitution stance that effectively precludes *thinking*, presenting us with an administrative-political *fait accompli*. The message of this No to all of us who care for Europe is: We will not allow anonymous experts whose merchandise is sold to us in a brightly colored, liberal-multiculturalist package to prevent us from *thinking*. It is time for us “Europeans”—both citizens and lovers of Europe—to become aware that we have to make a properly Political decision of what

Class Consciousness Matters

What's missing from the *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal*.

BY DAVID MOBERG



THE MYTH OF THE SELF-MADE MAN IS AMERICAN CULTURE'S own special heart of darkness, helping to explain both its infectious optimism and ruthless greed. The idea holds enough truth and seductiveness to make it easy to forget its delusional dangers. To reprise Marx's famous formulation, individuals, like humankind, do make their own personal history, but not under conditions they choose. But in America, we choose to ignore the caveat about conditions at our peril.

The myth, or belief, that people are solely what they make of themselves is useful to keep in mind while reading two ongoing series: the *New York Times*' on class and the *Wall Street Journal*'s on social mobility. Both focus attention on a truth about American society that runs counter to most people's deep-seated beliefs: There is less social mobility in the United States now than in the '80s (and less than in the '70s) and less mobility than in many other industrial countries, including Canada, Finland, Sweden and Germany. Yet 40 percent of respondents to a *Times* poll said that there was a greater chance to move up from one class to another now than 30 years ago, and 46 percent said it was easier to do so in the United States than in Europe.

Although the news about social mobility has not been widely reported, it is generally recognized that inequality has grown over the past thirty years. The *Times* series highlights how much the super-rich have made out like, well, bandits. While the real income of the bottom 90 percent of Americans fell from 1980 to 2002, the income of the top 0.1 percent—making \$1.6 million or more—went up two and a half times in real terms before taxes. With the help of the Bush tax cuts, the gap between the super-rich and everyone else grew even larger.

The American people accept this, it is argued, because they think not only that there's more social mobility than there is, but also that they'll personally get rich. Indeed, a poll in 2000 indicated that 39 percent of Americans thought they were either in the wealthiest one percent or would be "soon." The *Times* poll was slightly less exuberant: 11 percent thought it was very likely they would become wealthy, another 34 percent somewhat likely.

"It is OK to have ever-greater differences between rich and poor, [Americans] seem to believe," David Wessel wrote in the *Wall Street Journal*, "as long as their children have a good chance of grasping the brass ring."

This view is problematic. First, the greater the inequality, the less likely the possibility of mobility. Increased inequality worsens the large disparities in resources that families can devote to education—resources that are increasingly important for both entering many careers and for social mobility. A college degree, it should be stressed, is important not

just because of the knowledge acquired, but because college serves as a class-biased sorting mechanism for entry to certain jobs. In contrast, the record suggests that countries with greater equality also have greater mobility. Substantive equality creates more equality of opportunity.

But even if there were mobility, such inequality would be problematic. Is it fair that society's wealth be divided so unevenly? Isn't there a decent standard of living—rising as economies become wealthier—to which everyone who “works hard and plays by the rules,” in the Clintonian formulation, should be entitled? Great social disparity means that the financially well-off use their money and greater political leverage to protect their privilege rather than to design policies for the common good.

In defense of the rich getting richer, former Bush economic advisor Gregory Mankiw wrote in response to the *Times* series that the richest increased their share when the economy boomed; so if we want prosperity, let the plutocrats prosper. But the economy grew faster in the first three decades after World War II when equality was increasing than in the next three decades when equality was decreasing. In any case if the income from growth is captured by the very rich, as it largely has been for a couple decades, this path to prosperity offers little to most people. Also, with high inequality, even the pretense of community declines, social conflict increases and society functions more poorly. Individual mobility is not the only way to improve one's lot. Social solidarity and working together can improve everyone's lot.

This brings us back to the self-made man. It becomes clear, as the *Times* series is titled, that “class matters,” just as race, gender and other accidents of history matter. The social class into which someone is born largely defines one's class as an adult, and both make a difference in how healthy or how long-lived the person will be, especially in the absence of universal health insurance. It influences access to education and to jobs.

The myth of the self-made person, however, encourages the person who succeeds to think his good fortune is due entirely to his work and genius. For this reason businessmen in the United States have historically been more anti-union and hostile to government than their counterparts in Europe. And the myth makes those who fail blame themselves.

According to recent polls, American workers—worried more about job insecurity, rising costs of education, health care expenses, the availability of insurance, pension failures and social security privatization—are increasingly looking for stronger social action to provide security. They are deeply skeptical about the globalization that has increased inequality and insecurity. Like the French vote on the European Union constitu-

Kids from wealthy families can take unpaid internships, spend a year abroad or experiment with careers; kids from working class families are likely to stick with a summer job that pays the bills and provides health insurance, thus failing to finish college.

More important, wealth and class are issues of power. Aaron Kemp, who lost his job when Maytag shifted production from Illinois to Mexico and Korea

Great social disparity means that the financially well-off use their money and greater political leverage to protect their privilege rather than to design policies for the common good.

tion, a U.S. referendum on globalization might well divide along class lines. The irony is that taking responsibility as a society to guarantee more stability and equality—by regulating the global economy and establishing universal guarantees of health care, education, and retirement security—can provide citizens with more individual freedom.

For now, the realm of freedom for most Americans remains constricted to the shopping mall, where they can buy their identities. Both the *Journal* and *Times* point to the rapid growth of personal credit as one way that Americans have continued to buy while earnings have stagnated. Former United Auto Workers official Frank Joyce even sees the rise of credit cards as undermining workers' interest in unions. Income, earned or borrowed, obviously greatly differentiates people's lives, even if a working class consumer can only indulge in a box of luxury chocolates or sub-luxury car. And the growing differences in income are exacerbated by growing but unmeasured differences in health insurance, as well as various business perks such as free cars or expense accounts.

But the focus on income ignores the even greater inequalities of wealth. Wealth provides security. As the *Times* series points out, the better-off consistently talk of making choices while working class individuals talk about feeling trapped.

(see “Maytag Moves to Mexico,” January 17), remarked, “I never remember even thinking about what class I was in until after the plant closing announcement and layoff. And then you begin to think about what class you're in.” Rather than manners or fashion, class ultimately has more to do with who has the power to make such decisions and the powerlessness of the majority. These crucial aspects of class—social, political and economic power—have been missing from the series.

It might have been good for the *Times* to run an excerpt of Michael Graetz and Ian Shapiro's new book, *Death by a Thousand Cuts*. It recounts how the super-rich worked with ultra-conservatives to demonize and possibly eliminate the estate tax, which they renamed the “death tax.” As William Gates, Sr., father of Microsoft Bill, often argued on behalf of the tax, the very rich accumulate their wealth not simply because of what they did but because of the society in which they lived, and they have a debt to that society. And the heirs of such wealth are the antithesis of self-made men.

The rich used their political power, their money and the right's shameless, mendacious hucksters to protect their riches, at the expense of society. But belief in the myth of the self-made man—abetted by the feckless incompetence of Democratic opposition—made many ordinary people suckers for the right-wing pitch. Class matters, but so does consciousness of

Hand Over the Keys

A generous gesture can make a difference.

BY NIR EISIKOVITS

AS ISRAEL PREPARES TO WITHDRAW from the Gaza Strip, the question of what to do with the houses the settlers leave behind is becoming more and more contentious. Some policy makers argue that images of Palestinians dancing on the roofs of the handsome cottages vacated by the Jews would project Israeli weakness and embolden militants in the West Bank to step up their struggle. The only way to avoid this, they claim, is to destroy the houses before pulling out. Others warn that demolishing the homes would amount to a public relations disaster; that Israel cannot afford the kind of media coverage that comes with razing entire neighborhoods in one of the world's most crowded pieces of real-estate.

The difference between these two arguments is not as significant as it seems. Both are concerned with appearances. They revolve around the question of how we might seem, instead of asking what we ought to do. For those Israelis not yet cynical enough to collapse these two concerns into each other, perhaps some ancient advice might be useful. In 425 B.C., six years into the Peloponnesian War, Sparta made Athens a peace offer. "If great enmities are ever to be really settled," the Spartan envoys told the Athenian assembly, "we think it will be not by the system of revenge and military success, but when the more fortunate combatant waives his privileges, and, guided by gentler feelings, conquers his rival in generosity and accords peace on more moderate terms than expected."

Generosity!? Would those crazy Spartans recommend we hand over the keys? That Prime Minister Sharon take to the podium in the Knesset and announce that the houses are a gift of good will? That, while he is at it, he pledge that Israel would finance new construction projects to replace the squalid refugee camps in Jabalia, Rafah and Khan Younis?

In fact, yes. That is exactly what they would suggest. The idea is pretty simple: A dramatic

Carlos Dulitzky is the first of thousands leaving Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip under Sharon's disengagement plan.



DAVID SILVERMAN/GETTY IMAGES

display of generosity can change the dynamics of a conflict. Generosity is so far removed from the predictable, petty, gruesome dance of blow and counterblow, that it can cause parties to stop and think. The bookkeepers of death might be forced to look up from their desks. Once such an act of generosity is performed, the Spartan envoy told the Athenians, "instead of the debt of revenge that violence must entail, [an] adversary owes a debt of generosity to be paid in kind, and is inclined by honor to stand by his agreement."

Hopelessly naive? Not quite. On November 19, 1977, after fighting four wars with Israel, and in spite of violent opposition at home, Anwar Sadat, president of Egypt, stood before the Knesset and addressed it in Arabic. "We really and truly welcome you to live among us in peace and security," he told a stunned Israeli public. Years of suspicion melted away that night. Sixteen months later, Sadat, Prime Minister Menachem Begin of Israel, and President Jimmy Carter were shaking hands on the White House lawn.

On March 16, 1997, King Hussein of Jordan stepped into a small apartment in the Israeli town of Beit Shemesh, knelt before

a woman sitting on the floor, took her hand and begged for forgiveness. He repeated this gesture in six other residences, personally apologizing for the killing of seven Israeli schoolgirls by a Jordanian soldier. "I looked in his face and I saw that he was ashamed, and he had tears in his eyes, and he was honest," one of the mothers told the *Washington Post*. The tension over the incident, which had the potential to destabilize the relationship between the two countries, was dissipated. Generosity can make a difference.

Incidentally, the Athenians rejected Sparta's offer. They had just scored a major naval victory, and did not want to quit while they were ahead. Twenty-one miserable years later, their legendary navy all but destroyed, they surrendered to Sparta on humiliating terms. The walls of their city were torn down, the fortifications of their port were destroyed, their popular assembly dissolved. Failing to be generous, it turns out, can make quite a difference as well. ■

NIR EISIKOVITS, an Israeli attorney, is a post-doctoral fellow at the International Institute for Mediation and Political Conciliation.

No Negotiation

Sharon reveals his plans for West Bank.

BY NEVE GORDON

ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER ARIEL SHARON is a man of deeds rather than words. So on those rare occasions when he does disclose his political goals it is important to pay close attention and carefully consider every word.

During his recent visit to the United States, Sharon revealed to a group of Jewish donors how he foresees the developments between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. He divulged a plan he has not yet talked about in Israel, at least not in a public forum.

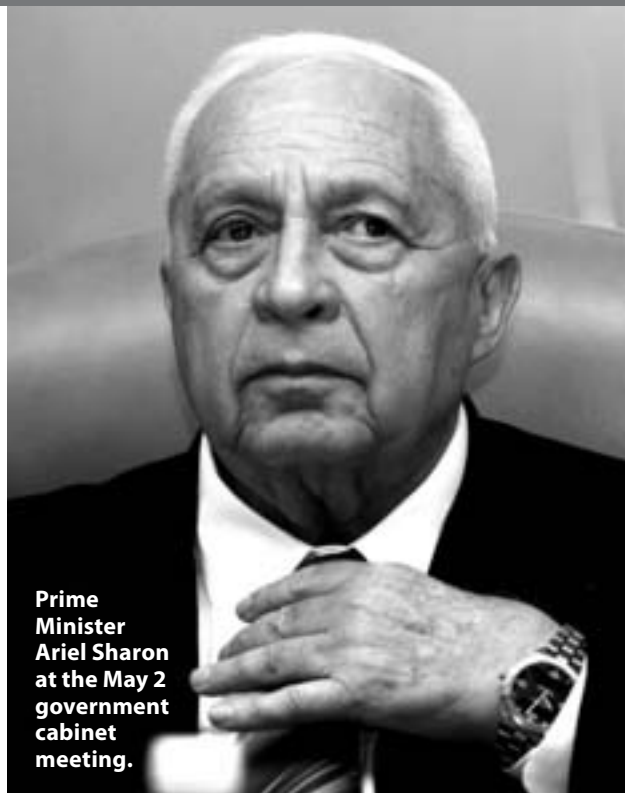
"There won't be negotiations with the Palestinians about Jerusalem or the settlement blocks of Ariel, Ma'aleh, Edumim, and Gush Etzion," Sharon said, adding, "They will remain eternally under Israeli sovereignty within a contiguous territory." This straightforward sentence reveals both the method that Israel's prime minister intends to embrace and a crucial element informing the substance of his plans.

Concerning the method, Sharon clearly

stated that he intends to replicate the unilateralist approach he adopted vis-à-vis the Gaza withdrawal. Israel, in other words, does not plan to discuss two of the most central aspects of the occupation—East Jerusalem and the large Jewish settlement blocs—and will force its plan on the Palestinians. Peace, according to this Machiavellian logic, is achieved when the strong impose their will on the weak.

No less important is the substance, and particularly the two words with which Sharon concluded his sentence: "contiguous territory." This seemingly benign phrase is well worth noting, since the attempt to create a contiguous territory from the three Jewish settlement blocs is tantamount to declaring war.

Allow me to explain. Ariel is a large settlement located in the heart of the West Bank's



Prime Minister Ariel Sharon at the May 2 government cabinet meeting.

JIM HOLLANDER/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

northern part. The settlement Ma'aleh Edumim is located about 30 km southeast of Ariel, while Gush Etzion is located another 20 km southwest of Ma'aleh Edumim, and is situated in the West Bank's southern part. Connecting these three settlement blocs means that the territory Sharon intends to offer the Palestinians will not be contiguous (except maybe by building tunnels!), and that Israel plans to annex a large portion of the Palestinian state-to-be, which is already a very small entity—22 percent of the British Mandate of Palestine.

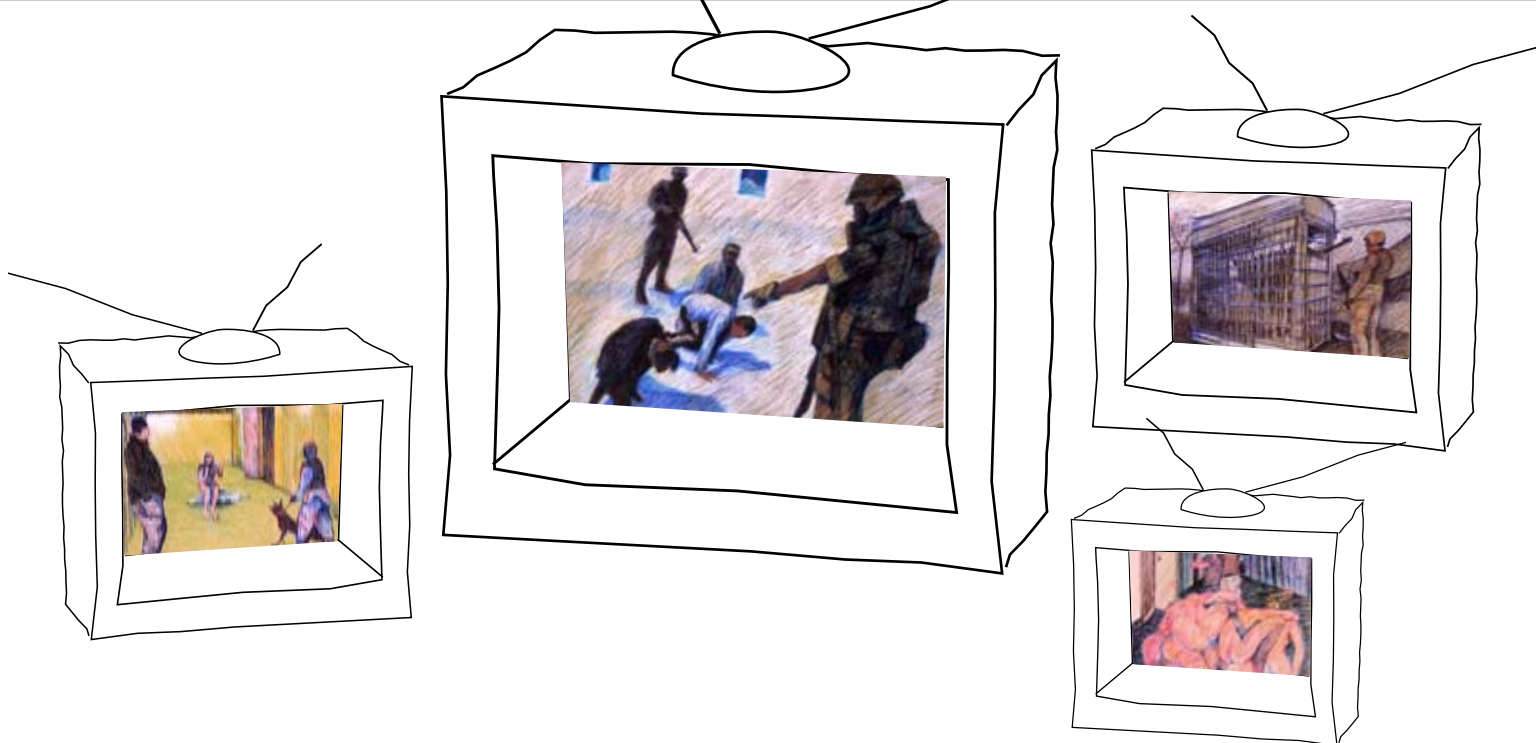
No Palestinian leader can accept such a solution. But since negotiations, at least regarding these crucial issues, are not on Sharon's agenda, the Palestinian position is, in a sense, besides the point.

The outcome of such a move will no doubt be devastating, since unlike Israel's withdrawal from Gaza, which has been endorsed by all of the Palestinian political factions, including Hamas, Sharon's West Bank plan will be unanimously rejected. Resistance will most likely mount and the bloody cycle of violence will resume, this time with even greater vengeance. ■

NEVE GORDON teaches politics at Ben-Gurion University, Israel, and is currently a visiting scholar at the University of California, Berkeley.



- 34 Books: The economics of terror.
- 35 Books: The right wing's judiciary debater's manual.
- 36 Books: In Iraq, there's no way to blot out the original sin.
- 37 Music: The activism of Immortal Technique.
- 40 Talking with Tim Robbins.



BY SILJA J.A. TALVI

Torture Fatigue

"The Christian in me says it's wrong," Army Specialist Charles A. Graner Jr. said of torturing prisoners in Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq. "But the corrections officer in me says I love to make a grown man piss himself."

Photos taken of him demeaning captives at Abu Ghraib exposed Graner as the sadist that his surroundings allowed him to be. But are the differences between brutal correctional officers like Graner and other Americans as stark as we would like to think?

An acquaintance of mine recently admitted how much he enjoyed watching the torture scenes in the new blockbuster, *Sin City*. "I know it's strange," he said, "but there's something I get out of seeing torture and violence like that on the screen. It's like it's some kind of release."

He is not alone. *Slate's* David Edelstein enthused that the film boasted "the most relentless display of torture and sadism I've encountered in a mainstream movie. My reaction to *Sin City* is easily stated. I loved it. Or, to put it another way, I loved it, I loved it, I loved it. I loved

every gorgeous sick disgusting ravishing overbaked blood-spurting artificial frame of it. ... It seems pointless to tut-tut over the depravity. *Sin City* is like a must-have coffee-table book for your interior torture chamber."

That interior torture chamber is more visible in popular culture than ever before. One of the nation's most popular network television shows, "24," opened its season finale with an over-the-top torture scene of a man, forcibly strapped down to a chair, being shocked repeatedly with volts of electricity, screaming and crying out in sheer agony. The scene was so attention-grabbing that it ended up being featured as one of the week's top events on VH1's "Best Week Ever." Torture pops up everywhere these days, even on the latest T-Mobile commercial, which features a young, black man tied down to a chair,

screaming in an interrogation-style room as he's tortured by having his phone bill run up. At the end of the commercial, a smiling Catherine Zeta-Jones delivers her pitch as he stumbles around the store, still bound to the chair.

What accounts for the prevalence and popularity of these scenes of torture and misery? Could these media images be serving as a form of misplaced cathartic release to ease our social conscience, a bizarre way of processing and desensitizing ourselves to real life torture?

Consider that only one-third of Americans questioned in a *Washington Post*-ABC News poll last May defined what happened at Abu Ghraib as "torture." Half of those polled believed that such acts of brutality were taking place as a matter of policy in the "war on terrorism."

Our legislators are no better in this regard. With the notable exception of individuals like Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.), congressional vows to find out who was responsible for the Abu Ghraib scandal ebbed after the prosecution of a few low-level ranking officers, a few fines and the issuance of a single demotion.

In an exhaustive May 2005 Amnesty International report, "Guantánamo and beyond: the continuing pursuit of unchecked executive power," the running count of detentions in the global war on terror stands, at least, at 70,000 people, including the known deaths of 27 individuals in U.S. custody since 2002. To take but one example, consider this June 2004 account of Martin Mubanga, a British citizen who was kidnapped by U.S. Forces in Zambia and eventually brought to Guantánamo:

I needed the toilet and I asked the interrogator to let me go. But he just said "you'll go when I say so." I told him he

had five minutes to get me to the toilet or I was going to go on the floor. He left the room. Finally, I squirmed across the floor and did it in the corner, trying to minimize the mess ... He comes back with a mop and dips it in the pool of urine. Then he starts covering me with my own waste, like he's using a big paint-brush, working methodically, beginning with my feet and ankles, and working his way up my legs. All the while, he's racially abusing me, cussing me: "Oh, the poor little negro, the poor little nigger." He seemed to think it was funny.

What such systemic brutality means, on some level, is that Americans bear collective responsibility for the damage our government has done. That's not an easy thing to contemplate. But the public won't find any such admission represented on the pages of our commercial newspapers and magazines. Instead we see outrage and compassion about things that we're not responsible for, the deaths of Terri Schiavo and the Pope, for instance, or the toll of the tsunami.

At the recent National Conference for Media Reform, author Naomi Klein spoke of these media-managed, "ritualized, collective mourning moments" that serve as "compassion release valves."

"We have moments where all that pent up compassion is allowed to release, and you are allowed to care [and have] spasms of outrage and compassion," Klein said.

Such large-scale, media-frenzied, compassion-release-valve mechanisms are important, she added, because "the feeling of being outraged alone is the feeling of being crazy."

Could it be that Americans are subconsciously trying to stay sane by desensitizing themselves and finding cathartic release in endless media depictions of torture and bru-

ality? The U.S. military death toll now nears 2,000 men and women, in addition to the countless thousands of Iraqis and Afghans who have died. Who among us truly wants to face the emotional impact of what we've done?

I asked clinical psychologist Bruce Levine, the author of *Commonsense Rebellion*, what he thought of all of this. "When you become disconnected from your own alienation [from society], you become cut off from your humanity," he told me. "You become numb to all kinds of atrocities."

A crucial mechanism of that numbing process where real-life torture is concerned seems to revolve around the ability to release primal reactions (terror, fear and outrage, for instance) in both a socially condoned and politically non-threatening way. Gorging on the barrage of fictionalized torture imagery has become the easiest and most accessible way for American citizens to do this with the least

possible discomfort. Whether consciously or subconsciously, the writers and producers of torture-saturated media play a crucial role in this process, feeding and fueling this perverse and deeply rooted pathology.

These media-produced, sanitized bloodsports have become a thick bandage affixed over the deep and ugly gash of human suffering and cruelty. But that bandage can only stay in place for so long before it begins to rot away.

Real healing and emotional catharsis would actually require genuine discomfort, discourse and reparation. It would necessitate an admission of our collective culpability for the emotional and physical damage inflicted by our government, whether on the streets of Baghdad, or in the interrogation rooms of Abu Ghraib and Guantánamo Bay.

Without such reflection, we're headed for our own true-to-life *Sin City*, a veritable carnival of bloodsport, torture and misery for all. ■

ART SPACE



"Camouflage Comics: Dirty War Images" was launched this May at the Academy of Fine Arts in the Netherlands. The web project, which visually reflects on the interplay between dictatorship, human rights and collective memory, uses comics as a way to meditate on the legacy of Argentina's Dirty War. See camouflagecomics.com for more.

Terronomics

BY PHYLLIS ECKHAUS

Why can't we come to terms with terrorism? "Terrorism" is like "pornography"—we think we "know it when we see it," still, the word evades useful definition because it covers aspects of human existence we'd rather ignore

than understand.

Indeed, the shock of 9/11 was not entirely unlike discovering the parish priest with triple-X videos of local altar boys—we were suddenly confronted with a predatory underworld we do our best not to see. It's one of the great privileges of middle-class American life that we typically navigate our days in flight from boredom rather than murder, starvation, disease or rape—and we remain blithely oblivious to our precarious privilege and the portion of the world that lives otherwise.

Loretta Napoleoni looks under that rock. In *Terror Incorporated*, Napoleoni, an Italian economist who quotes Noam Chomsky and consults for the Department of Homeland Security, attempts to do an end run around politics by applying the "dispassionate tool" of economics. She expresses hope that by taking terror out of the political realm, she can help facilitate a "worldwide consensus ... as to its definition."

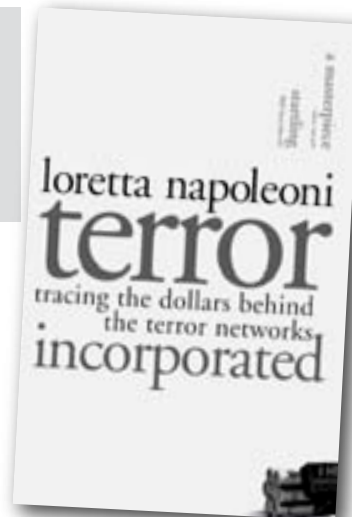
Of course, hers is a futile aspiration, as the only way to come to consensus on "terrorism" would be to agree on what constitutes a just world and the appropriate means of obtaining it. What makes a claim to power, land or resources legitimate? Osama bin Laden

Terror Incorporated
By Loretta Napoleoni
Seven Stories
324 pages, \$17.95

calculates that at \$135 dollars a barrel or \$4.05 billion a day, U.S. appropriation of Arab oil means America owes the Muslim world a fortune.

Describing terrorism as big business, Napoleoni showcases Yasser Arafat as a brilliant innovator, the Henry Ford of armed struggle. Frustrated by the fickleness of his state sponsors, Arafat decided to make the PLO self-sufficient by setting up shop in Lebanon and turning PLO-occupied regions into bases for criminal enterprise, which seeded legitimate businesses worldwide. Allegedly, the PLO once owned so many poultry farms in Africa it could have supplied eggs to every Arab army. By the early '80s, the group had accumulated such wealth that Arafat's transfer of cash out of Lebanon accelerated collapse of the currency.

Others have followed Arafat's lead, seeking financial independence through legit and illegit business. And here is Napoleoni's real theme: She



argues that Islamist "terror" is fueled not by religion but economics, a desire to break the West's stranglehold on markets. Napoleoni compares Islamist Jihad to the Crusades, which she characterizes as a campaign to bust up Arab control of international commerce. But as a rationale of terrorism, why favor economics over fundamentalism? The rise of Muslim extremists parallels the ascendance of Christian conservatives within the Republican Party—arguably facilitated but not subsumed by an unholy alliance with profiteers.

Napoleoni is earnest and thoughtful, yet her book is enormously aggravating. She

presents Islamism as monolithic and calls the pipeline channeling financial support from abroad "the Mosque Network"—would any good editor have let her describe Jewish support for Israel as "the Synagogue Network"? Utterly indiscriminate in her references, she even cites Lyndon LaRouche's Web site as a credible source. Her sloppy research means many of her "facts" fall apart upon close scrutiny.

Most upsetting, Napoleoni concludes her book with a rousing endorsement of the Patriot Act, praising it as "the first financial counter-terrorism measure" that other nations would do well to emulate. This supposed solution to terrorism presumes that "good guy" governments given unchecked power will righteously deploy it to shut down "bad guy" armed groups. Yet as Napoleoni herself seems to acknowledge, there are no "good guys." Even alleged human rights heroes like Jimmy Carter practiced ruthless realpolitik, underwriting Indonesian terror in East Timor and provoking a war in Afghanistan between the USSR and our then-friends the Mujahedin.

Besides, who's a "bad guy"? Napoleoni's single swipe at defining terrorism cites three characteristics: "its political nature, the targeting of civilians and the creation of a climate of extreme fear." Surely, this encompasses virtually all contemporary wars, as bombs and guerrilla tactics replace hand-to-hand combat. What was Shock and Awe if not a terror campaign?

Napoleoni grants states an exemption from the terror label they don't deserve. Indeed, she seems not to recognize that state-sponsored inequalities foment terror far more effectively than lax banking laws. Ultimately, combating terror in a vastly unjust world is like trying to stop a flood from below sea level. There's no prospect of success without moving to higher ground. ■

Origin of the Specious

BY STEPHEN J. FORTUNATO, JR.

In wars, even cultural ones, it is crucial to know the opposition—their strategies, their theories, their deceptions. Mark R. Levin's *Men in Black: How the Supreme Court is Destroying America*, a New York

Times best-seller, is a right-wing debaters' manual that furnishes rhetoric to Tom DeLay, Bill Frist and their cohorts as they campaign to revamp the federal judiciary in their own image. An introduction by Rush Limbaugh and cover blurb by Sean Hannity ("a modern conservative classic") alert the reader to don foul-weather gear. But it is the chapter titles that set the table with raw meat: "Radicals in Robes," "Socialism from the Bench," "Al Qaeda Gets a Lawyer," "Justices in the Bedroom," etc.

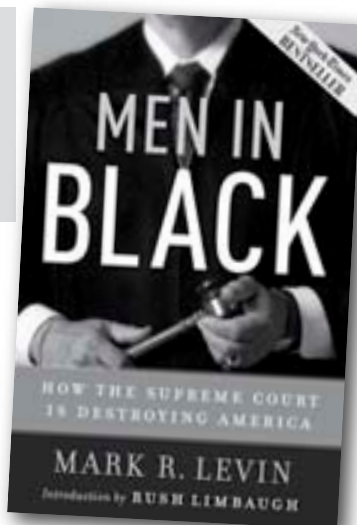
Levin's thesis is as simple as it is simple-minded. Good judges—too few by Levin's count—are originalists; that is, they "look to the text of the Constitution and the intent of the framers when deciding a constitutional question." Activist judges, on the other hand, "see their role limited only by the boundaries of their imaginations," and "they substitute their will for the judgment of deliberative bodies."

Originalism, of course, has no basis in history or logic, but this does not deter Levin, any more than it has deterred originalism's most famous popularizers, Robert Bork and Antonin Scalia. Levin occasionally references the Founding Fathers, but conveniently omits declarations

Men in Black: How the Supreme Court is Destroying America
By Mark R. Levin
Regnery
288 pages, \$27.95

by both Alexander Hamilton and James Madison that the Constitution was crafted to allow future generations to adapt the law to changed circumstances. As Hamilton wrote in *The Federalist Papers* (no. 34), "There ought to be a capacity to provide for future contingencies as they may happen; and as these are illimitable in their nature, so it is impossible safely to limit that capacity."

For Levin, the Supreme Court first lurched dangerously off the narrow path of originalism in 1803 when it ruled in *Marbury v. Madison* that it could declare an act of Congress unconstitutional. Though Chief Justice John Marshall, a Revolutionary War veteran who championed the adoption of the United States Constitution at the Virginia Ratifying Convention, surely qualifies as a framer, Levin claims that Marshall's decision eviscerated the prerogatives of the executive and legislature: "For 200 years, the elected branches



have largely acquiesced to the judiciary's tyranny."

Self-described originalists confront a number of practical difficulties caused by the passage of time and the continuing advance of knowledge in the physical and social sciences. They also face the bald fact that the authors of the Constitution and its amendments left many terms unexplained and undefined: "probable cause," "due process," "equal protection," and so on.

Levin proudly allies himself with the theocratic right, including former Alabama Chief Justice Roy Moore of granite-block Ten Commandment fame. This is fitting,

as originalism has more in common with biblical exegesis than any responsible form of judicial decision-making.

Not since Aristotle (348–22 B.C.) observed that judges bring about "correction of law where it is defective owing to its universality" has any responsible legal thinker suggested that judges must always defer to the legislature or the executive. It was Justice Benjamin Cardozo—an appointee of President Herbert Hoover no less!—who demonstrated in his classic, *The Nature of the Judicial Process*, that judges have always drawn upon the constantly evolving store of knowledge outside the law for assistance in making their decisions. If they did not, and if they always upheld enactments of the majority, African Americans would still be riding at the back of the bus and women would be banned from practicing law.

A crafty polemicist for the right, Levin sprinkles his diatribe against the Supreme Court—past and present—with the language of individual liberty and racial justice. He points to the infamous decisions of *Dred Scott* upholding slavery and *Korematsu* allowing the World War II internment of Japanese-Americans as examples of judicial abuse. But Levin fails to grasp that the majorities in both these cases employed the judicial philosophy he advocates, deferring to a congressional enactment in the former case and in the latter to executive orders issued in the name of national security.

In fairness, however, it must be said that throughout his book Levin capitalizes the "L" in left, perhaps suggesting that he sees progressives as a formidable political force. Let's hope. ■

STEPHEN J. FORTUNATO JR. is an associate justice on the Rhode Island Superior Court.

Original Sin

BY CHRIS BARSANTI

It is convenient to attribute the current anemic state of the anti-war movement to the ephemeral attention span of the iPod generation, but the shift is more likely due to hopelessness. The problem may lie in

the suspicion that there are no easy solutions and the only way out may be forward, with more blood to be shed before peace can be glimpsed.

In his book *Squandered Victory: The American Occupation and the Bungled Effort to Bring Democracy to Iraq*, Larry Diamond has a name for this damned-if-we-do-damned-if-we-don't viewpoint: original sin. An unnamed "distinguished diplomat" gave the concept to Diamond, saying, "The war itself was the original sin. ... When you commit a sin as cardinal as that, you are bound to get a lot of things wrong." Or, for the less theologically minded, "When you enter a one-way street in the wrong direction, no matter which way you turn, you will be entering all the other streets in the wrong way."

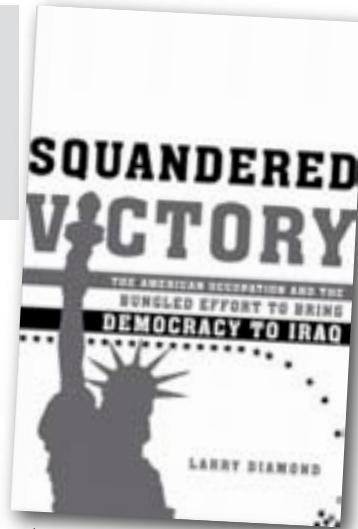
Although Diamond's book is essentially another entry in the mini-genre of books about how the United States entered that one-way street, the fact that he actually participated in the creation of the Iraqi government gives a little more heft to his complaints than the usual recitation of Pentagon blunders and miscalculations. A Stanford professor, Hoover Institution senior fellow and coeditor of the *Journal of De-*

Squandered Victory
By Larry Diamond
Times Books
384 pages, \$25

mocracy, Diamond also happens to be an acquaintance of Condoleezza Rice—but not so close that he was expecting her call in November 2003. After a couple months of bureaucratic wrangling, Diamond was finally cleared to leave for Baghdad, where he would stay until April 2004.

His description of those four months of duty in the heavily fortified Green Zone makes up the bulk of *Squandered Victory*, and although it can be a slog at times—his admirably clear prose can't completely hide the fact that Diamond remains a policy wonk—the minutiae involved in creating a democracy from the ground up is as fascinating as it is exhausting.

When Diamond arrived in Baghdad, he found himself billeted in one of Saddam's former palaces, "a sprawling maze of marbled halls, carved and gilded doors, dusty chandeliers ... and generally grotesque excess," where he and other members of the Coali-



tion Provisional Authority (CPA) would plan the nation's democratic infrastructure. A dyed-in-the-wool democratic idealist, Diamond was also a war skeptic. He didn't accept Rice's offer because he was a neocon ideologue with dreams of fashioning a Western-style government in a foreign land. Rather, he felt that as someone who had "studied, observed, and assisted democracy-building efforts in some twenty countries over the previous two decades," he was honor-bound to help build something out of the wreckage of totalitarian brutality.

Although Diamond has

little patience for blowhards like Paul Wolfowitz or incompetents like Jay Garner, he was initially quite impressed (as were the Iraqis) by Paul Bremer's dramatic, MacArthur-like demeanor, which Diamond says symbolized "the best and worst of the United States." Unfortunately, the muddy work of fashioning coalitions and compromises among the elaborate patchwork of Iraqi political and religious forces proved far more complicated than the constitution that MacArthur famously drew up for postwar Japan in six days. Through the torturous negotiations, Diamond is disturbed by the myopia of the CPA and the White House. At one point he is "appalled" to see Iraqis raised under a dictatorship take the more democratic side of a constitutional argument than the Americans.

By the time Diamond finally quit Iraq, the security situation had started building to the numbing pitch of nihilist violence characterizing the conflict today. "It is ironic—and tragic—that an administration so bold as to launch a war to topple Saddam Hussein blanched at the prospect of confronting a much smaller bully like Muqtada al-Sadr," Diamond writes. It seems a Catch-22: There can be no democracy without security, yet the lack of security comes directly from anger at there being no democracy.

And so, by the end of *Squandered Victory*, Diamond is reduced to forlornly cataloging mistakes made and listing the reasons why today's Iraq has all the ingredients in place for a Lebanon-style civil war. All one can do is hope that the next batch of nation-builders will read the grim conclusions of Diamond, and think again before leaping off the cliff. ■

CHRIS BARSANTI is a writer living in Brooklyn.



Immortal Technique rocks a crowd in Chicago.

Respect the Technique

BY ANNA GRACE SCHNEIDER

Critics frequently trash hip hop because commercialism dominates the genre. But, as Bakari Kitwana notes in his new book *Why White Kids Love Hip Hop*, the music serves a higher purpose as a

“voice for the voiceless” and a bridge across America’s racial divide. Artists like New York-based rapper Immortal Technique provide that voice, heightening awareness within a community desperate for change.

For both jaded hip hop heads and political activists, Immortal Technique’s music is refreshing. At a sold-out venue, teenagers fall silent as Immortal Technique—also known as Tech—kills the beat and reminds them: “Blacks and Latinos get the worst education/ while devils run America like *Birth of a Nation*/ affirmative action and reversed discrimination/ that shit is a pathetic excuse for reparations.”

On a recent trip to Chicago, Tech toured Roberto Clemente High School in Humboldt Park and then attended a hip hop open mic night down the street at the Batey Urbano, a youth center in the heart of this slowly gentrifying Puerto Rican neighborhood.

Tech encouraged the kids to be revolutionaries by working together and contributing to their community. He explained that the only way for black and Latino people to find a way out of poverty is to own, produce and maintain control over their resources. By empowering themselves, he says, these kids can overcome the racism

that he argues is a distraction, a side effect, of our society’s corrosive inequality. “America speaks one language: money. America’s religion is capitalism, ever so much more than Christianity,” he said. “But believe me, the white left is still racist.”

Tech’s activism and authenticity derives from hard life experience. He was born in Peru 27 years ago and his family left when he was 4, fleeing an escalating civil war. They landed in Harlem and, while not delving into his childhood, he admits it was rough. “I tried to go to [college] but I ended up going to prison,” he says.

His epiphany occurred as he rode the corrections bus up-

state. “Prison is not the rite of passage that makes you a man. All that hustlin’, robbin’, stealin’, that didn’t make me a real nigga at all,” he says. “When I came home from that and I put money in my mother’s pocket to help support my family, that made me a real nigga.”

During his time behind bars, Tech devoured books about history, religion and civil rights. He wrote often in jail and when he got out, he took that material and eventually produced two albums, *Revolutionary Vol:I* and last year’s *Revolutionary Vol:II*. Ambitious titles, but the man has big goals, and with his multi-faceted appeal and a new album, *The Middle Passage*, scheduled to drop in early fall, he is poised for battle. *Vol:II* sold 45,000 copies on Immortal Technique’s own label, Viper Records. Moving that many units is an impressive feat in today’s music industry, in which five companies control 90 percent of the music distribution. He and a few other rappers, including M-1 of Dead Prez, organized a hip hop union last fall called G.A.M.E. (Grassroots Artist Movement), whose members receive free healthcare in New York and Philadelphia. “You make more of a political statement by owning a record label than anything you could possibly say on a record,” Tech says.

Despite his progressive political message, sensitive ears will be offended when Tech raps graphically about abortions or what he would do to the mothers and girlfriends of his enemies. But getting caught up in the language misses the point. Tech’s gritty irreverence is precisely what lends him credibility among wary, young hip hop fans. As one aspiring emcee at the Batey told Tech, “I don’t usually like underground hip hop or Latino rappers, but your shit is raw, I love it.” ■

Classified

Reach more than 30,000 readers by placing a classified ad in the next issue of *In These Times*.

TEXT (PER ISSUE)		DISPLAY (PER ISSUE)	
1-2	95¢ WORD	1-2	\$30 INCH
3-5	85¢ WORD	3-5	\$28 INCH
6-9	80¢ WORD	6-9	\$26 INCH
10-19	75¢ WORD	10-19	\$24 INCH
20+	65¢ WORD	20+	\$22 INCH

Please send a check or money order, your ad text, and this form to Emily Udell, Advertising Director, *In These Times*, 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave, Chicago, IL 60647.

You can also reserve space by calling Emily at (773) 772-0100, x240, or by sending an e-mail to emily@inthesetimes.com

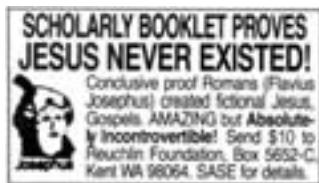
ACTIVISM

SPREAD THE WORD about *In These Times* in your community by becoming an *In These Times* Action Associate! Action Associates promote and personally recommend the magazine through one-on-one contact and distribute issues at community hotspots and political gatherings. Associates are thanked with a complimentary subscription or a subscription extension. To learn more about becoming an Action Associate contact Tracy Van Slyke at tracy@inthesetimes.com or (773) 772-0100, ext. 243.

BLOGS

JOIN THE LIVELY discussion on "The ITT List," the political blog written by the staff of *In These Times*. Visit www.theittlist.com.

BOOKLETS



BOOKS

FORMER FEDERAL AGENTS reveal the tragedy-related intrigue in government operations. Print and e-books. defraudingamerica.com. Orders 1-800-247-7389

GONE SHOPPING! AN odyssey of discovery. A fresh look at the pursuit of happiness. www.HighWayPublishing.com or www.amazon.com.

BUMPERSTICKERS



FREE BUMPER STICKER
CALL 800-630-1330 OR
see - www.fcnl.org
FRIENDS COMMITTEE ON
National Legislation

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

INCREDIBLE OPPORTUNITY. LEARN to Earn \$100K+ per year working from home. Not MLM. Training provided. Free info. (800) 482-5129.

EVENTS

CELEBRATE INDEPENDENT PRESS! Join *In These Times* and other Chicago publishers for an Independent Press Reception on June 27th from 6-9 PM at Roosevelt University in Chicago. *In These Times* Senior Editor Salim Muwakkil will speak and Found magazine's Jason Bitner will present. Food and drinks will be available. Co-sponsoring publications include: *The Chicago Reporter*, *Found*, *In These Times*, *The Journal of Ordinary Thought*, *Poetry Magazine*, and *Residents' Journal*. Roosevelt University, 430 S. Michigan, Room 244. For more information, call Emily Udell at (773) 772-0100, ext. 240, or e-mail emily@inthesetimes.com.

COLLEGE OF COMPLEXES—Chicago's weekly free speech forum—www.collegeofcomplexes.org.

COLLEGE OF DUPAGE Foundation Annual Golf & Tennis Outing. Monday, August 22 at White Eagle Golf Club in Naperville, IL. Join us for golf or mixed-play tennis, lunch, dinner

and a great auction. Proceeds benefit student scholarships. Call 630-942-2286 for details.

INDEPENDENT VOTERS OF Illinois – open monthly meetings of the National Affairs Committee, Chicago, www.iviipona.org, cpaidock@hotmail.com or (312) 939-5105.

LABOR

WE FIGHT FOR Roses Too! Labor Music, Film, Books, Posters, Buttons. www.laborheritage.org, (202) 974-8040.

MERCHANDISE



NEWSLETTERS

WWW.PEACEBUTTONS.INFO
FREE PEACE History Newsletter. Sign Up at: www.peacebuttons.info/E-News/thisweek.htm

PERSONALS

Concerned Singles
since 1984, linking singles who care about peace, social justice, diversity, gender equity, and the environment.
Nationwide / international. All ages.
FREE SAMPLE: Box 444-IT, Lenox Dale, MA 01242; (413) 243-4350; OR www.concernedsingles.com

RADIO

DISCOVER AMERICAN-FM ON Live365. Charter Pacifica Internet Radio affiliate offers free CD-quality streams 24/7 from AMERICAN-FM.org. Reading Between The Lines of Democracy with Amy Goodman, Thom Hartman, Bob McChesney, and other leading progressive thinkers. Hear FIRE ON THE PRAIRIE weekends on AMERICAN-FM. Sponsorship inquiries to sponsors@american-fm.org, or (415) 596-9915.

WEB SITES

THERE'S ALWAYS TOMORROW! www.sagacious-smartass.com.

OUTSIDE THE BOX! Secular, spiritual, blogs, books. www.karlroebbling.com

www.liberalswithguns.com

FREE REPORT!
Join today -- and even if you do nothing -- you could be a millionaire next month!
The No. 1 Lottery Club in America!
21 Racetrack Rd NE #Z3172
Fort Walton Beach, FL 32547

Embedded

Continued from back page

Ben Brantley of the New York Times described Embedded as “presenting a United States in which not only war, but also the reporting of it is carefully engineered by an elitist Washington cabal.” Attacks from the right are one thing, but how does one deal with ridicule from the “liberal” media?

ROBBINS: Did you put quotes around liberal? [Laughs.] It's nothing new for me. You get thicker and thicker skin and you come to expect this stuff. When I told the cast we were moving to New York, I said, “The good news is that we were invited by the Public Theater, the bad news is that we are not going to get one good review.” I knew it going in.

You don't go into the backyard of the media and tell them they were full of crap during the war and expect a nice warm hug in return. The elite are very sensitive about their role in society and they don't take well to criticism.

In a couple of reviews there was some talk of me “preaching to the choir.” That always made me laugh. First of all, the choir was way out of tune before the war. They were singing all over the place. Half of the audience we were performing to were liberals who supported this war. You could feel this palpable tension in the house. What they expected was the Bush-bashing thing that made it simple, black and white—Bush is an idiot, let's all laugh. Look at how smart we are.

That's not what this play is about. It is about everyone's involvement. It's about asking them to feel compassion for the soldiers. It's about asking them to think twice about their own complicity, when they were being convinced by CNN and the *New York Times* that this war was a good idea. That makes a lot of people uncomfortable, and I don't blame them for being uncomfortable. They should be uncomfortable.

By distributing Embedded on DVD, are you trying to go around the theatrical world and critics?

ROBBINS: No, not at all, it's never hurt this project to have bad reviews. In going to DVD, I was very interested in what Robert Greenwald did with his documentaries. He reversed the model, reversed the paradigm. First he distributed independently,

then, through the course of people's interest, he wound up in movie theaters. I don't think I ever want to be in movie theaters, but I do like the idea of going backwards. I like the idea of saying that we are going to offer it exclusively to Netflix and you can buy it on the Web site (embeddeddive.com), and we'll see what happens. I didn't want to just give it away to a distributor and leave it in someone else's hands. Throughout the process I have been actively involved in helping it find its audience. I've been trying to reach out to Web sites and opinion makers and magazines like *In These Times* to create grassroots distribution.

In a speech to the National Press Club in 2003, you asked, “In the midst of all this madness, where is the political opposition? Where have all the Democrats gone?” Have you found any answers?

ROBBINS: [Laughs.] I still am looking for them. I would love to see a strong gutsy opposition arise, but I think we are going to see the Republicans self-destruct before

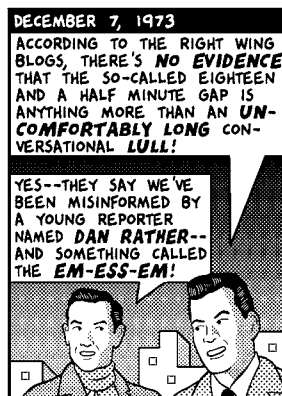
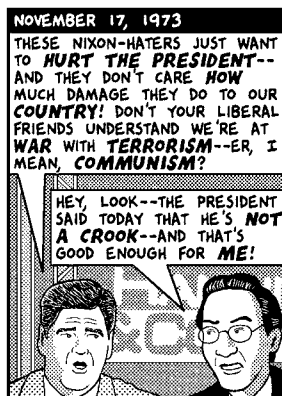
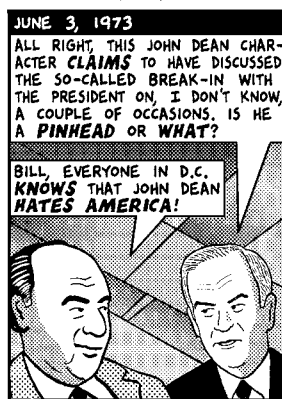
that happens. The power structure is so ingrained in Washington. It seems like very few people are there for the public's interest. We should expect more from our leaders, set the bar a little higher, so that we can gather inspiration and excitement and support from our leaders based on them doing really progressive things for the people

The good news is more and more people are realizing that grassroots organizations, community organizing and Internet distribution of literature and entertainment and news offer an alternative that is more connected to the needs of the people than any mainstream newspaper or magazine or Washington politician.

Hopefully, at some point the politicians will follow the people. All great changes happen that way. I can't think of one movement that started with politicians. If the politicians realize that there is this massive movement out there that has rejected this status quo, mind numbing, entertainment journalism, then maybe we will see some change. Maybe we will see some media reform, which is direly needed. ■

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



BY JOEL BLEIFUSS

EMBEDDED

with Tim Robbins

EMBEDDED, written and directed by Tim Robbins, is a play that examines the War in Iraq through its key players: the Bush officials who concocted it, the embedded journalists who covered it and the soldiers who fought it. The play opened in 2003 at the Actor's Gang Theater in Los Angeles. From there it went to The Public Theater in New York for a four-month run, and then on an eight-state national tour. The March 29, 2004, *In These Times* featured a scene from the play (www.inthesetimes.com/site/main/article/embedded/). Robbins has now turned *Embedded* into a film and released it on DVD (www.embeddedlive.com). *In These Times* talked with him in early June.

What are you hoping to accomplish with this release?

ROBBINS: That more people get the chance to see it. We got an amazing response wherever we performed the play, despite the fact that it wasn't receiving any kind of support in the press.

From the start it was a word-of-mouth phenomenon. In L.A. we sold out an eight-week run in two days, which never happens. We wound up extending it for four more months. In New York we were lambasted by the critics. And people still came and we sold out for four months.

It was the same when we went on a tour of eight states in the fall. People came and gave standing ovations. It was the reaction we got from military families, soldiers and war journalists who had just

returned from Iraq. It was their enthusiasm, their support, that gave us the mandate to film the show.

It was filmed on the stage of the Public Theater in New York?

ROBBINS: Yes. I wanted to shoot it with the energy the show had, the rock 'n' roll, the rudeness, the boisterousness. That's why I put 360 degrees of cameras so you see the audience in the shots and I put seven mikes in the audience and a mike on every actor. It has more of a feeling of a rock 'n' roll show than a play. We were also able to give documentation of sources, which was the one thing we were never able to do in the live show. People would say, "Oh my God, that's absurd." And I wanted to scream, "It's sourced." Now in the movie, I get to source the dialogue.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 39

